1922 – 2012
THE BIBLE OF BOXING
The RING
90 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE
FEBRUARY 2012
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POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

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The RING

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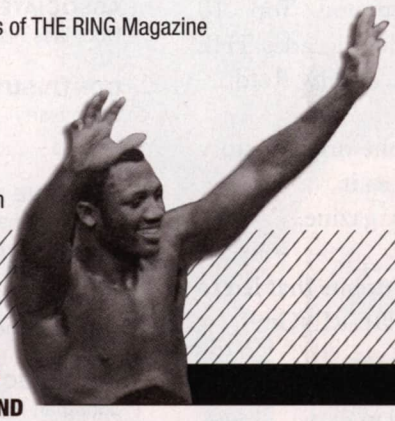

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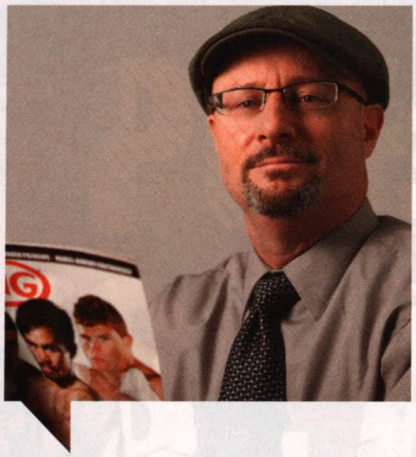

A LOOK BACK

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Boxing has crammed a lot into the past 90 years.

The prime of Jack Dempsey. The long count. The dominance of Joe Louis, whose epic rematch with Max Schmeling was symbolic of good vs. evil. The savage trilogy of Tony Zale and Rocky Graziano, by which all other series are judged. The perfection that was Sugar Ray Robinson. The commanding presence of Muhammad Ali. The Thrilla in Manila. Leonard and Hearns and Hagler and Duran. The gripping run of young Mike Tyson. The ear-biting incident. The "Golden Boy." Manny Pacquiao's reign.

These are but a few of the fighters and events that stand out in the rich history of boxing since 1922, the year Nat Fleischer and partners established THE RING Magazine.

This special issue of "The Bible of Boxing" celebrates that history and the 90th anniversary of the publication with a 47-page package focusing on the past.

THE PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- A nine-part, decade-by-decade look at the last 90 years, including many vintage photos from THE RING archive and the biggest stories from each 10-year period.

- An overall pound-for-pound Top 10 since 1922, courtesy of historian and boxing writer Cliff Rold.

- A pound-for-pound Top 10 for each of the nine decades THE RING has existed, also by Rold.

- A portion of one original story from each decade as it appeared in the magazine.

- A story on the events that led to the founding of THE RING.

- And a story on the history of the magazine, from 1922 to the present, as well as a timeline of pivotal events in the life of the publication.

Also, we were saddened recently by the loss of Joe Frazier, one of the greatest heavyweights of all time.

We look back on his life and career in this issue, with stories by gifted authors from Frazier's hometown of Philadelphia – Bernard Fernandez and Stan Hochman.

Fernandez looks back on Frazier's career; Hochman, who knew Frazier well, gives you his personal perspective on the fighter.

Thus, in light of our anniversary and Frazier's passing, we have an unusual opportunity to provide what we hope is an interesting journey into the past.

Enjoy.

The Ring

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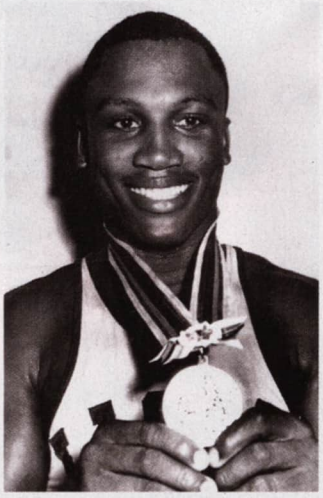
Juan Carlos Burgos unleashes his emotions after he defeated Luis Cruz by a majority decision on the Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez undercard on Nov. 12 in Las Vegas.

Image: **Chris Cozzone / Fightwireimages**

Kermit Cintron had no answers for Saul Alvarez's arsenal Nov. 26 in Mexico City. "Canelo" won by a fifth-round knockout.

Image: **Etzel Espinosa / Hoganphotos**

SO LONG, JOE



Boxing, like the rest of the world, has changed tenfold since the days when real men would fight for pride, dominance and glory. Joe Frazier was what boxing was and is meant to be. Now money is king and the fights are lean. Men don't fight until they can't stand; instead, they hug, kiss and sucker punch to win. With the passing of Joe, the 10 count starts, it's almost the end of the days when real men fought the best. They accepted challenges to prove they are the best, not like the men of today who take only the fights they can win with the least amount of risk and the highest amount of reward. Smokin' Joe Frazier, may he rest in peace.

Rolando Quintana

AN IMPORTANT NIGHT

James Kirkland's dramatic win over Alfredo Angulo was not only reminiscent of Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo but possibly the Fight of the Year. It was also a microcosm of contemporary society and testament to many things. It was a testament to the determination of Kirkland, who was able to overcome a one-round defeat and prison stretch. It was a testament to Ann Wolfe, whose transformation of Kirkland moves her to the elite of boxing trainers. And it was a testament to Don King, who took seriously the concept of women's boxing in the '90s (promoting the likes of Christy Martin) and whose gamble paid off. Women will be competing in the Golden Gloves and in the Olympics next year. The microcosm is a sport which once saw Marvin Hagler's handlers bounce two female judges from Hagler's fight with Mustafa Hamsho to women moving front and center in the sweet science.

Brad Morris
New York

IN AWE OF MARQUEZ

I will admit that I sided with those who believed that Marquez would be too old and too small to handle Pacquiao. I was quite nervous for him when he entered the ring. But as the fight went on, I was in awe of Marquez's performance. His footwork and timing was flawless. He stymied everything Pacquiao threw at him and basically made Pacquiao look frustrated and even silly at times. In the end, the judges robbed him of a fairytale victory, but they cannot take away the fact that Juan Manuel Marquez silenced his doubters and once again showed that he is truly a great fighter. Well done, Juan. We salute you!

Bernardo Aguirre
Sydney, Australia

NO SURPRISE

Manny Pacquaio's recent majority-decision win over Juan Manuel Marquez was no surprise to me. He's not the only fighter to face difficult challengers in the ring. All the great ones have gone through it. Muhammad Ali had great difficulty with Ken Norton. Sugar Ray Leonard struggled with Thomas Hearns. Sugar Ray Robinson had a tough time dealing with Randy Turpin. When champions conduct themselves like champs, taking on all-comers, there will be someone in their career who will be a thorn in their side.

Raymond Williams
Clinton, Md.

WRITE TO THE RING!

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THE GOOD FIGHT

Muhammad Ali went on the college lecture circuit to make ends meet during his exile from boxing in the late 1960s. Gene Tunney once lectured on Shakespeare at Yale. And Mike Tyson was a commencement speaker at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio (where he accepted an honorary doctorate degree with the declaration, "I don't know what kind of doctor I am; but watching all these beautiful sisters here, I'm debating whether I should be a gynecologist").

Vitali Klitchko is cut from a different cloth. The reigning WBC heavyweight champion ran for mayor of Kiev in 2006 and 2008, finishing second but winning election to the Kiev City Council on both occasions. Thereafter, he was appointed to the Ukrainian delegation to the Congress of the Council of Europe. In April 2010, he became chairman of the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (a political party dedicated to challenging the status quo).

Klitschko, 40, lectured before a standing-room-only crowd on Oct. 13 at Columbia University. His appearance had nothing to do with boxing. He was invited to speak under the auspices of the school's Ukrainian studies program in his capacity as chairman of UDAR.

He spoke in English (his fourth language) for 20 minutes, then answered questions for an hour more. On occasion, he asked a translator to assist him. "Politics is a dirty game," he told his audience. "I came into politics six years ago with rosy glasses. The glasses fell off fast."

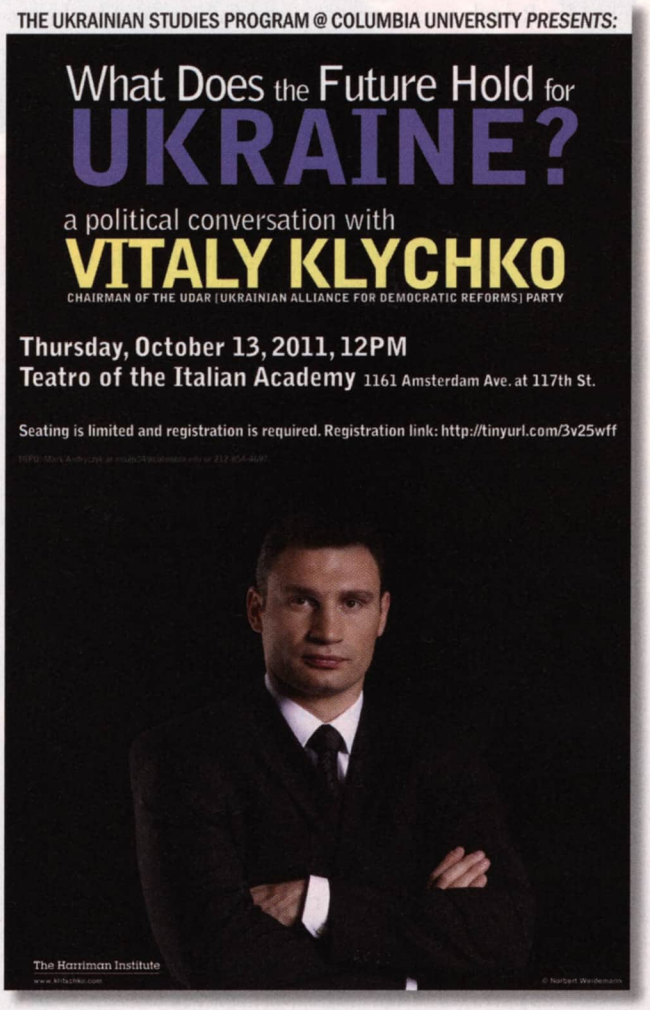
One of the hot-button social issues in Ukraine today is whether Ukrainian should be designated as the official state language. Roughly half of Ukraine's citizens speak Ukrainian. The other half speak Russian or a smattering of different languages. Klitschko elicited applause when he stated, "I'm a Ukrainian who speaks Russian. I started studying Ukrainian 10 years ago. The state language in Ukraine must be Ukrainian."

During his lecture, Klitschko called for more free speech in Ukraine, election laws that do more than safeguard the ruling party's hold on power, gender equality in all aspects of Ukrainian life and equal economic opportunity to replace what he called "a closed oligarchical economic system."

"Twenty years ago," Klitschko said, "Ukraine became independent. Since that time, our hopes for democracy have not been realized. We need to recognize the potential in what we have. People must get involved. We have millions of armchair experts. They sit at home, they watch television, they complain. And they change nothing. The will to change must come from the people. The government today is there for the power, not for the people. Politics for the people who control the government is simply a business. The main value for them isn't people; it's money. It's a corrupt system. We want to change that."

Is Vitali Klitschko a modern-day version of Don Quixote tilting at windmills?

Time will tell. But he's fighting the good fight outside the ring. ■



Vitali Klitschko is a good fighter outside the ring, too.

GREATEST SPORTS MOMENTS... OUTSIDE BOXING

Freddie Roach was a pretty good fighter, and he keeps piling up honors for his work as a trainer. His gridiron career was less remarkable.

Asked to recount his greatest moment in a sport other than boxing, Roach recalled, "When I was 12 years old, I was on the [Dedham, Mass.] All-Star team in the Pop Warner League. I wasn't very good. My brother Pepper was a year older than me. He was the starting halfback and safety. We were playing a team from Aliquippa, Pa. It was freezing cold and we were losing something like 35-0. I'd been sitting on the bench the whole game. My feet were numb. I couldn't feel my feet. That's how cold it was. Aliquippa fumbled on their own 1-yard line. We recovered, and the coach put me in the game for Pepper. The quarterback called play 44; the four back, which was me, running through the four hole between tackle and guard. That was my moment of glory. For the first time in my life, I was going to score a touchdown. The quarterback gave me the ball. I fumbled. The other team recovered. And when I got back to the bench, Pepper told me, "I could have done that."

COMMON SENSE

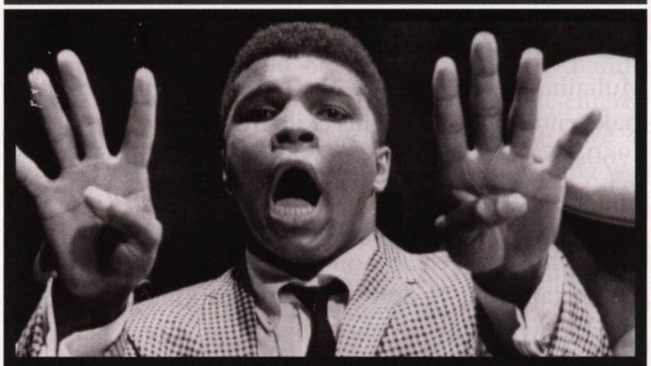
Too often, it seems as though common sense is unwelcome in boxing. Here are three common-sense suggestions to improve the sport:

1. Forty people in the ring before a fight is absurd. That's 3½ tons of mostly waste material piled high on the ring canvas. In a worst-case scenario, it can damage the canvas. Under the best of circumstances, it keeps the fighters from circling the ring and testing for dead spots. Don't let anyone but the fighters, their chief seconds, the referee and ring announcer in the ring before a fight.

2. Sooner or later, a fighter will have eye trouble during a fight because a sequin that came off someone's trunks will find its way into his eye. Ban sequined trunks before that happens.

3. Intelligently run sports (like baseball, football and basketball) require opposing teams to wear different color uniforms so spectators can tell them apart. Make different color trunks mandatory in boxing. Put the requirement in bout contracts with a monetary penalty assessable against the promoter of whichever fighter violates the color code. Faced with the prospect of losing money, promoters will make sure that the provision is enforced.

QUICK QUIZ



1. In his sixth professional fight, Cassius Clay fought an opponent who had established a modern-day record by scoring 44 consecutive knockouts. Who was he?

2. Who were the referees for the three fights between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier?

3. Muhammad Ali fought in 12 countries. Name them.

(Answers at the end of this column)

QUIZ ANSWERS: **1.** Lamar Clark. Clay knocked him out in the second round. **2.** Arthur Mercante (Ali-Frazier I), Tony Perez (Ali-Frazier II) and Carlos Padilla (Ali-Frazier III). **3.** Ali fought in the United States, England, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Ireland, Indonesia, Zaire, Malaysia, the Philippines and the Bahamas.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at **thauser@rcn.com**. His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Oscar De La Hoya says Julio Cesar Chavez is the best all-around fighter he ever faced.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

By **Michael Rosenthal** / Image: **Getty Images**

Oscar De La Hoya fought many of the best fighters in the world during his 16-year professional career, in which he won 10 major titles in six weight classes.

He was asked to name the best he has faced in 10 categories. Here are his answers.

BEST FIGHTER: JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ

He had it all. He could box, he could punch, he had an iron chin. And he had guts. He had the whole package. He wasn't 25 when he fought me but he was still an elite fighter.

BEST BOXER: PERNELL WHITAKER

He was very elusive, very hard to hit. He was very slippery.

BEST PUNCHER: ARTURO GATTI

This kid, may he rest in peace, didn't catch me flush on the chin but his punches were so heavy, heavier than Ike Quartey's. I don't know what he had in his hands.

QUICKEST HANDS: MANNY PACQUIAO

His punches don't come from your basic boxing style; they come from all sorts of weird angles. That's what makes him difficult.

QUICKEST FEET: PERNELL WHITAKER

He was very elusive. He could spin you around and not exert much energy doing it. He did it with ease. It was so natural to him. Footwork starts everything.

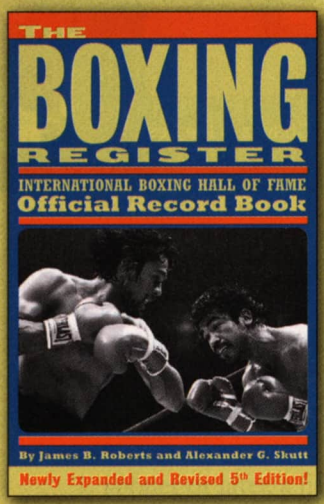
BEST DEFENSE: PERNELL WHITAKER
Again, he was slippery, elusive. It was hard to crack that defense.

BEST CHIN: JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ
I hit him with some shots. In our second fight, I said to myself, "My gosh. How can he not go down?"

BEST JAB: IKE QUARTEY
He had an incredible jab. The special thing about it was that he threw it from his chin or sometimes he would leave it loose in the air. You wouldn't notice him throwing it. His jab was very powerful, one of his best weapons. And when it landed, it really hurt. It didn't sting; it hurt. Like a hammer coming down on you.

STRONGEST: FERNANDO VARGAS
He just felt strong. It was so hard to handle him. I felt his weight. His punches were heavy and strong. He was solid. We all know what happened there, though: He had a little help.

SMARTEST: BERNARD HOPKINS
He is the type of fighter who gets in your head. For our press tour, he was always polite, very nice. No trash talk, no nothing. After the fight, I realized: He did that because he didn't want me to fight angry, to try to take his head off. At the time I fought him, he didn't like pressure from his opponent because he didn't like fighting the whole three minutes. He is one smart cookie. ■



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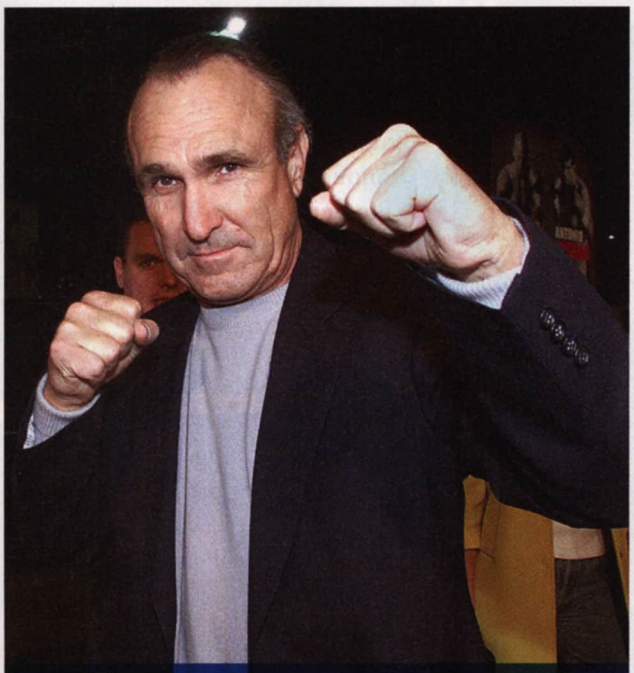


Filmmaker **Ron Shelton** made one boxing movie and plans to make more.

CELEBRITIES WHO ARE DEVOTED TO THE SWEET SCIENCE. THIS MONTH:

DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER

RON SHELTON

By **Michael Rosenthal** / Image: **Getty Images**

Filmmaker Ron Shelton wrote and directed what some believe is the greatest sports film ever made, *Bull Durham*, which was based on his experiences as a minor-league baseball player.

Shelton also made another baseball film (*Cobb*), one about basketball (*White Men Can't Jump*) and one on golf (*Tin Cup*).

None of the sports mentioned above curry favor with Shelton any more than boxing, though.

He got his first taste of the sport in front of the radio, riveted by the vivid descriptions of the action from the announcers of the day. Today, he is a regular at big fights and follows the sport closely.

"I love it," he said.

Shelton made one film about boxing, *Play It to the Bone*, about two buddies driving together from Los Angeles to Las Vegas to fight one another. And he is working on a few more.

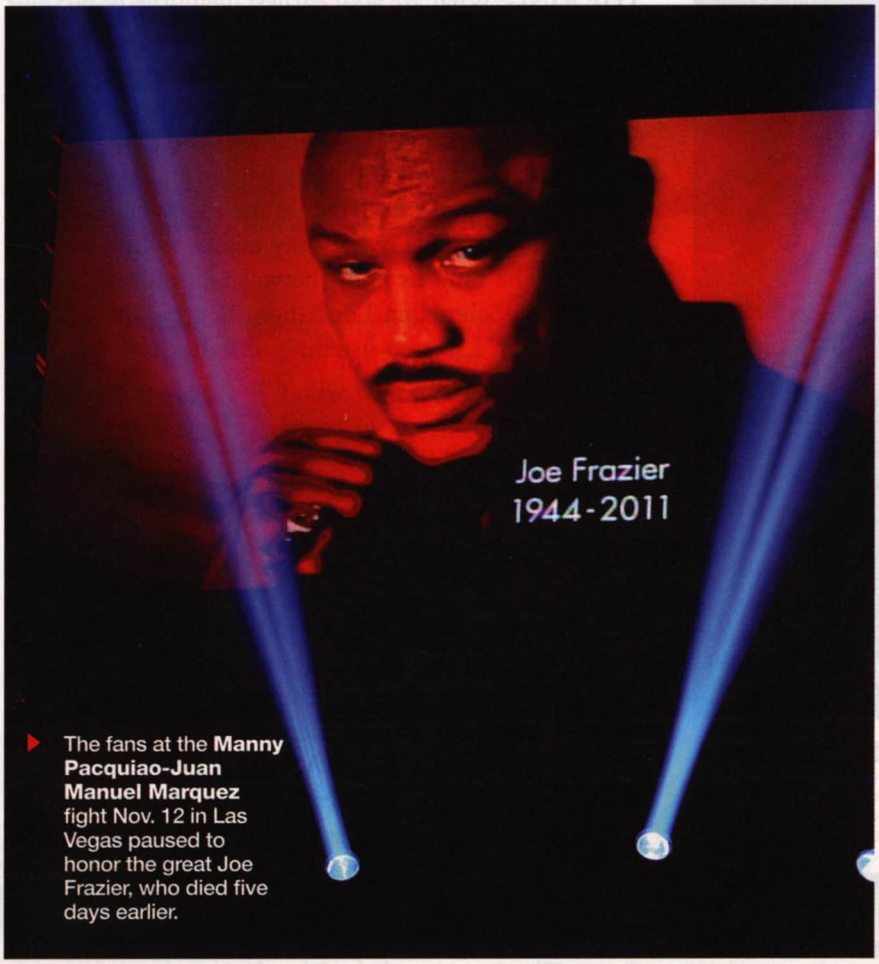
He took some time out from his busy schedule to talk to THE RING.

THE RING: What are your earliest memories of boxing?
Shelton: Like a lot of guys of my generation, *Friday Night Fights* on the radio and then later TV. Gillette. *To look sharp and feel sharp too, choose the razor that is built for you...* I remember listening to (Floyd) Patterson-(Ingemar) Johansson and early Rocky Marciano fights on the radio. And my dad told me stories about Billy Conn and Joe Louis, what they meant to him and the country. The famous fight [between Conn and Louis]. The (Max) Schmeling-Louis fight. I grew up with all those stories. I started listening to fights and watching them on television in the late 50s and I was hooked.

THE RING: You made a boxing movie, right?
Shelton: Yeah. And I want to make more. I have a (novel) that (trainer/author) F.X. Toole wrote. He wrote *Million Dollar Baby*, about a character like himself, an aging trainer who was a drinker and had heart problems. Clint Eastwood played him in (*Million Dollar Baby*). This is quite an interesting story about a kid out of the Texas border country, a Hispanic kid. His father is an ex-fighter, a junkie, fighting his way through life. The kid ends up in L.A. and is being trained by this older guy. They discover that the kid's father ended the trainer's (boxing) career and his gloves were packed in the fight. It's a fabulous tale about how life comes together. It hasn't been easy to get this made, though.

And I'm trying to put together a movie about Billy Conn, *The Boxer and the Blonde*, based on an article written by Frank Deford. I'm trying to get the rights back to it. Conn was an interesting guy. He weighed 165 pounds when he fought Joe Louis; Louis weighed 203. It was announced at 175 and 195 because they thought no one would bet on the fight. All Conn had to do was dance and he would've won but Louis knocked him out in the 13th round. They were both national heroes. The whole country stopped when they fought. Forget Pacquiao-Mayweather. They stopped the (Pittsburgh) Pirates game and played the fight over the loudspeaker. An aircraft carrier headed to Europe circled within range of the television signal so everybody on the ship could listen to it.

THE RING: You seem to be so passionate about boxing.
Shelton: I love it. People ask me all the time why I love it. These guys are the bravest athletes on the planet by far. And their skill level, especially the great fighters, is breathtaking. And until you see a great fighter up close, you have no idea how hard these guys really hit. I have the greatest admiration for them. ■

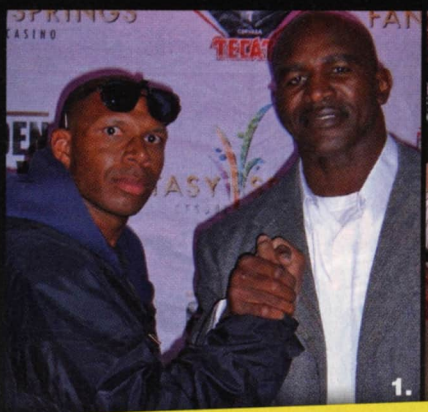


The fans at the **Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez** fight Nov. 12 in Las Vegas paused to honor the great Joe Frazier, who died five days earlier.

By **Brian Harty** / Image: **Getty Images**

On Nov. 5, news circulated that former undisputed heavyweight champion **Joe Frazier** was severely ill with liver cancer. Three days later, he passed away at the age of 67. It has been noted repeatedly since then that Smokin' Joe's career was in many ways defined by those standing next to him. The outpouring of affection that followed his death, though, was a testament to Frazier himself. In attendance at the memorial service in Philadelphia was **Muhammad Ali**, who, along with almost 4,000 other people, rose to his feet and ardently applauded the man who had beaten him 40 years earlier in the Fight of the Century. ... Former president of HBO Sports **Ross Greenburg** launched an eponymous production company with the mission of creating sports documentaries for outlets like NBC and the Golf Channel. His first project will deal with hockey. Meanwhile, it was announced that the gaping void left at Showtime by the departure of **Ken Hershman** would be filled by **Stephen Espinoza**, an attorney with past clients such as **Oscar De La Hoya** and **Mike Tyson**. ... Someone strongly resembling Tyson appeared in three videos for the Web site *Funny Or Die* as Republican presidential candidate **Herman Cain**, who, if elected, promised to turn human beings into batteries ("like in the Matrixes"). ... **Ching-Kuo Wu**, the president of the Amateur International Boxing Association, announced, in response to complaints from TV viewers who couldn't tell the difference between male and female competitors, a proposal for the 2012 Olympic debut of women's boxing: Make the athletes wear skirts. Some have described the new dress code as "elegant," giving competitors a "womanly impression." Others have gone with "stupid." Following public backlash, the AIBA will meet to discuss the issue in January. Those wishing to voice an opinion can do so at info@aiba.org. ... Also seeking to add a little elegance to the sport for a worthy cause, *Outside the Ropes* mainstay **Manny Pacquiao** offered 800 bottles of cologne called 'Scent of a Champion' (eww ...) for $50 each, with some profits going to benefit Keep Memory Alive at the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, which is in the early stages of a study that enlists professional fighters as subjects to better understand brain trauma. ... Former junior welterweight champion **Ricky Hatton** made his first appearance as a trainer in the corner of young welterweight **Adam Little**. Little won the fight, and all the best to Hatton's new career. But what really bears mentioning is the suspiciously initialed opponent, **Billy Smith**, who came into the fight with an astounding record of 12 wins and 106 losses, with two more bouts scheduled a week apart at press time. ■

AT THE FIGHTS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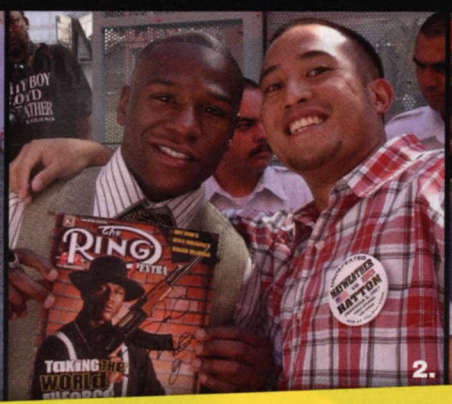
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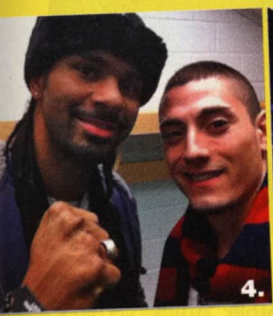
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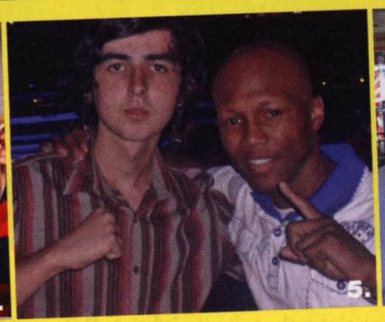
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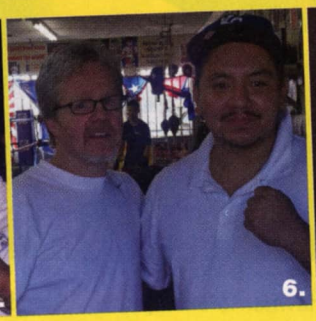
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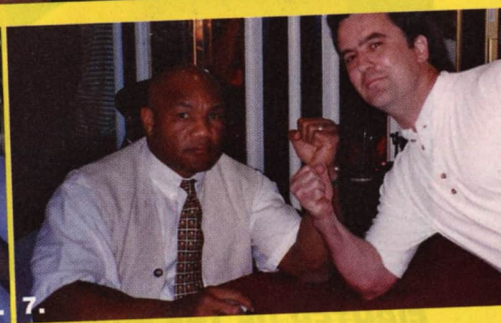
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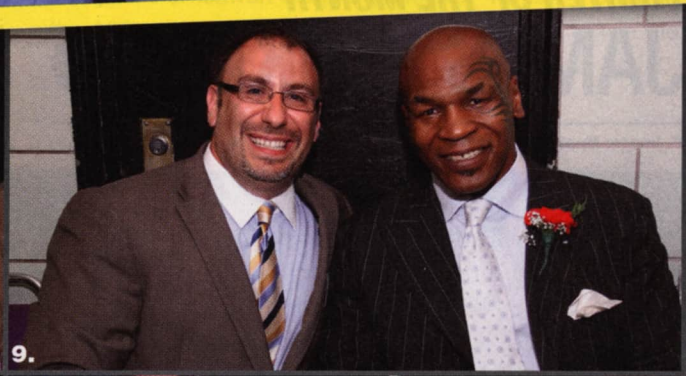
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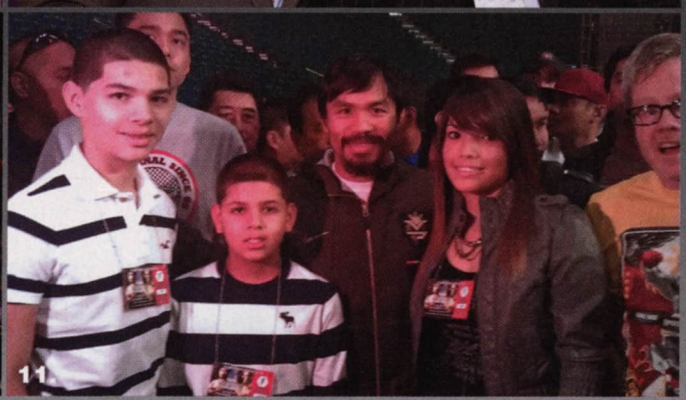

11.

1. Jamal Wynn with Evander Holyfield at Fantasy Springs Casino **2.** Bryant Susa with Floyd Mayweather before Hatton fight at Universal City, Calif. **3.** Danny Tarin with Abner Mares **4.** Giuseppe Belluscio with David Haye at Froch-Abraham fight **5.** Misael Marron with Zab Judah **6.** Phillip Muniz with Freddie Roach at the Wild Card Boxing Club **7.** David Pearcy with George Foreman at MGM in 1995 **8.** Lian Shoemaker and Smokin' Joe Frazier, professional boxing card at Harrah's Rincon Casino in San Diego county, Calif. **9.** Mark Chieco with Mike Tyson at International Boxing Hall of Fame Banquet **10.** Zaviel, Ashley and Alan with Israel Vazquez **11.** Arturo and Giovanni Marquez with Manny Pacquiao and Freddie Roach at the MGM Grand

WANT TO SEE YOURSELF IN RING MAGAZINE?

Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to **celebrityphotos@sepublications.com.** Make sure to include your name(s), celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

JAMES KIRKLAND

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

James Kirkland was all but written off after his shocking first-round knockout loss to light-punching Nobuhiro Ishida in April.

Three fights later he knocked out Alfredo Angulo in six rounds in Angulo's home country of Mexico, an astonishing turnaround that earned him recognition as THE RING'S Fighter of the Month.

Kirkland was on the canvas in the first round, an indication that he might suffer another quick setback. This time, though, he staved off his opponent's attempt to close the show and delivered a horrific beating of his own.

Referee Johnny Callas might've saved Angulo from serious injury when he stopped the fight at 2:01 of the sixth.

With the victory, Kirkland, now THE RING's No. 6-rated junior middleweight, went from a fighter desperate to regain his credibility to a compelling contender with a bright future.

Kirkland wasn't a run-away Fighter of the Month winner. He edged out Juan Manuel Marquez, whose stunning performance in a controversial loss to Manny Pacquiao was universally lauded.

RATINGS ANALYSIS FOR PERIOD ENDED NOV. 28, 2011

POUND FOR POUND: No change

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Glen Johnson (No. 7 last month) drops to No. 9 after losing a one-sided decision to IBF titleholder and No. 3-rated Lucian Bute, Johnson's second consecutive loss at 168 pounds. Arthur Abraham, who lost his last three fights in the Super Six World Boxing Classic, drops from No. 8 to No. 10. That allows Thomas Oosthuizen and George Groves (Nos. 9 and 10 last month) to jump two spots each. Groves stopped unrated Paul Smith in the second round in London.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Alfredo Angulo (No. 2 last month) drops to No. 7 after his stunning sixth-round knockout loss to James Kirkland. Kirkland (unrated last month) enters at No. 6. Austin Trout (No. 10 last month) drops out.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Selcuk Aydin (No. 10 last month) switches places with Shane Mosley (No. 9 last month) after outpointing Ionut Dan Ion.

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS: No change

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Ricky Burns (unrated last month) enters at No. 7 after his one-sided decision over Michael Katsidis. Jorge Linares (No. 10 last month) drops out.

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS: Juan Carlos Burgos (unrated last month) defeated Luis Cruz (No. 10 last month) by a majority decision. He takes Cruz's spot in the ratings.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Shinsuke Yamanaka (unrated last month) stopped Christian Esquivel (No. 10 last month) in Tokyo, thus taking Esquivel's spot in the ratings.

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS: Suriyan Sor Rungvisai (No. 4 last month) jumps two spots after defeating Nobuo Nashiro (No. 6 last month) to retain his WBC title, his second consecutive victory over a rated fighter. Sor Rungvisai outpointed Tomas Rojas in August. Nashiro, 2-3-1 in his last six fights, drops to No. 10. Meanwhile, Rojas (No. 5 last month) stopped veteran Feliciano Ledesma in the second round to retain his position. And Yota Sato (No. 7 last month) stopped previously unbeaten Kenji Oba. He moves up to No. 6.

FLYWEIGHTS: No. 1 Hernan Marquez maintains his position by stopping Luis Concepcion (No. 2 last month) in the first round of their much-anticipated rematch. Concepcion drops to No. 7. Moruti Mthalane (No. 3 last month) moved up a notch after stopping Andrea Sarritzu in the seventh round. And Toshiyuki Igarashi (unrated last month) outpointed Wilbert Uicab (No. 9 last month) in Tokyo. Igarashi takes Uicab's place in the ratings.

JR. FLYWEIGHTS: Ivan Calderon (No. 4 last month) drops out because he moved to strawweight. Omar Nino (No. 3 last month) likewise exits because of inactivity; he hasn't fought since Nov. 6 of last year. Ramon Garcia Hirales enters at No. 9 and unbeaten Jose Alfredo Rodriguez of Mexico takes No. 10, pushing everyone else up.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Akira Yaegashi (unrated last month) stopped Pornsawan Porpramook (No. 10 last month) in the 10th round of a Fight of the Year candidate to win the WBA title. Thus, Yaegashi replaces Porpramook at No. 10.

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   54-3-2 (38 KOs) | *WELTERWEIGHT*
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR**
   42-0-0 (26 KOs) | *WELTERWEIGHT*
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
   48-2-2 (27 KOs) | *MIDDLEWEIGHT*
4. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   27-1-0 (18 KOs) | *BANTAMWEIGHT*
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   53-6-1 (39 KOs) | *LIGHTWEIGHT*
6. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   56-3-0 (49 KOs) | *HEAVYWEIGHT*
7. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   83-3-1 (45 KOs) | *FLYWEIGHT*
8. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   28-0-0 (11 KOs) | *JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT*
9. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
   28-1-1 (24 KOs) | *FLYWEIGHT*
10. **ANDRE WARD**
    24-0-0 (13 KOs) | *SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT*

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, which the Top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's No. 1 and No. 2 contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our No. 1 and No. 3 contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on RATINGS at RingTV.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com

The Ring RATINGS
AS OF NOV. 28, 2011

FOR WEEKLY UPDATED RING RATINGS, GO TO RINGTV.COM

IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C	**JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** 53-6-1 (39 KOs)
1.	**BRANDON RIOS** 28-0-1 (21 KOs)
2.	**ROBERT GUERRERO** 29-1-1 (18 KOs)
3.	**ANTONIO DEMARCO** 26-2-1 (19 KOs)
4.	**MIGUEL VAZQUEZ** 29-3-0 (13 KOs)
5.	**KEVIN MITCHELL** 32-1-0 (24 KOs)
6.	**PAULUS MOSES** 28-1-0 (19 KOs)
7.	**RICKY BURNS** 33-2-0 (9 KOs)
8.	**JOHN MURRAY** 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
9.	**JOHN MOLINA** 23-1-0 (19 KOs)
10.	**RICHARD ABRIL** 17-2-1 (8 KOs)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C	**WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** 56-3-0 (49 KOs)
1.	**VITALI KLITSCHKO** 43-2-0 (40 KOs)
2.	**ALEXANDER POVETKIN** 22-0-0 (15 KOs)
3.	**TOMASZ ADAMEK** 44-2-0 (28 KOs)
4.	**EDDIE CHAMBERS** 36-2-0 (18 KOs)
5.	**ROBERT HELENIUS** 16-0-0 (11 KOs)
6.	**ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO** 32-1-0 (21 KOs)
7.	**DENIS BOYTSOV** 29-0-0 (24 KOs)
8.	**RUSLAN CHAGAEV** 27-2-1 (17 KOs)
9.	**CHRIS ARREOLA** 34-2-0 (29 KOs)
10.	**KUBRAT PULEV** 14-0-0 (6 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**MARCO HUCK** 34-1-0 (25 KOs)
2.	**YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ** 25-1-0 (13 KOs)
3.	**STEVE CUNNINGHAM** 24-3-0 (12 KOs)
4.	**KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** 45-2-1 (32 KOs)
5.	**DENIS LEBEDEV** 23-1-0 (17 KOs)
6.	**TROY ROSS** 24-2-0 (16 KOs)
7.	**ANTONIO TARVER** 29-6-0 (20 KOs)
8.	**GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI** 29-3-1 (12 KOs)
9.	**OLA AFOLABI** 18-2-3 (8 KOs)
10.	**GUILLERMO JONES** 38-3-2 (29 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**BERNARD HOPKINS** 52-6-2 (32 KOs)
1.	**JEAN PASCAL** 26-2-1 (16 KOs)
2.	**TAVORIS CLOUD** 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
3.	**CHAD DAWSON** 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
4.	**NATHAN CLEVERLY** 23-0-0 (11 KOs)
5.	**ADRIAN DIACONU** 27-3-0 (15 KOs)
6.	**ZSOLT ERDEI** 33-0-0 (18 KOs)
7.	**BEIBUT SHUMENOV** 12-1-0 (8 KOs)
8.	**KARO MURAT** 24-1-1 (14 KOs)
9.	**GABRIEL CAMPILLO** 21-3-1 (8 KOs)
10.	**ISMAYL SILLAKH** 17-0-0 (13 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**ANDRE WARD** 24-0-0 (13 KOs)
2.	**CARL FROCH** 28-1-0 (20 KOs)
3.	**LUCIAN BUTE** 30-0-0 (24 KOs)
4.	**MIKKEL KESSLER** 44-2-0 (33 KOs)
5.	**ROBERT STIEGLITZ** 40-2-0 (23 KOs)
6.	**SAKIO BIKA** 28-5-2 (19 KOs)
7.	**THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN** 17-0-1 (12 KOs)
8.	**GEORGE GROVES** 13-0-0 (10 KOs)
9.	**GLEN JOHNSON** 51-15-2 (35 KOs)
10.	**ARTHUR ABRAHAM** 32-3-0 (26 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C	**SERGIO MARTINEZ** 48-2-2 (27 KOs)
1.	**FELIX STURM** 36-2-1 (15 KOs)
2.	**DANIEL GEALE** 26-1-0 (15 KOs)
3.	**MATTHEW MACKLIN** 28-3-0 (19 KOs)
4.	**GRZEGORZ PROKSA** 26-0-0 (19 KOs)
5.	**JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.** 44-0-1 (31 KOs)
6.	**SEBASTIAN ZBIK** 30-1-0 (10 KOs)
7.	**DMITRY PIROG** 19-0-0 (15 KOs)
8.	**PAUL WILLIAMS** 40-2-0 (27 KOs)
9.	**HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM** 26-0-0 (17 KOs)
10.	**MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO** 52-5-1 (45 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**MIGUEL COTTO** 36-2-0 (29 KOs)
2.	**SAUL ALVAREZ** 39-0-1 (29 KOs)
3.	**VANES MARTIROSYAN** 31-0-0 (19 KOs)
4.	**ERISLANDY LARA** 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
5.	**CARLOS MOLINA** 19-4-2 (6 KOs)
6.	**JAMES KIRKLAND** 30-1-0 (27 KOs)
7.	**ALFREDO ANGULO** 20-2-0 (17 KOs)
8.	**CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE** 31-4-0 (18 KOs)
9.	**SERGIY DZINZIRUK** 37-1-0 (23 KOs)
10.	**PAWEL WOLAK** 29-1-1 (19 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**MANNY PACQUIAO** 54-3-2 (38 KOs)
2.	**FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** 42-0-0 (26 KOs)
3.	**VICTOR ORTIZ** 29-3-2 (22 KOs)
4.	**ANDRE BERTO** 28-1-0 (22 KOs)
5.	**VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO** 32-0-0 (21 KOs)
6.	**KELL BROOK** 25-0-0 (17 KOs)
7.	**JAN ZAVECK** 31-2-0 (18 KOs)
8.	**MIKE JONES** 25-0-0 (19 KOs)
9.	**SELCUK AYDIN** 23-0-0 (17 KOs)
10.	**SHANE MOSLEY** 46-7-1 (39 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**AMIR KHAN** 26-1-0 (18 KOs)
2.	**TIMOTHY BRADLEY** 28-0-0 (12 KOs)
3.	**MARCOS MAIDANA** 31-2-0 (28 KOs)
4.	**DEVON ALEXANDER** 22-1-0 (13 KOs)
5.	**LUCAS MATTHYSSE** 28-2-0 (26 KOs)
6.	**LAMONT PETERSON** 29-1-1 (15 KOs)
7.	**ERIK MORALES** 52-7-0 (36 KOs)
8.	**ZAB JUDAH** 41-7-0 (28 KOs)
9.	**DANNY GARCIA** 22-0-0 (14 KOs)
10.	**MIKE ALVARADO** 32-0-0 (23 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**TAKASHI UCHIYAMA** 17-0-0 (14 KOs)
2.	**JUAN CARLOS SALGADO** 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
3.	**ROMAN MARTINEZ** 25-1-1 (16 KOs)
4.	**JORGE SOLIS** 40-3-2 (29 KOs)
5.	**TAKAHIRO AO** 22-2-1 (10 KOs)
6.	**ADRIEN BRONER** 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
7.	**DIEGO MAGDALENO** 21-0-0 (7 KOs)
8.	**ARGENIS MENDEZ** 19-2-0 (10 KOs)
9.	**ELOY PEREZ** 23-0-2 (7 KOs)
10.	**JUAN CARLOS BURGOS** 28-1-0 (19 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**YURIORKIS GAMBOA** 21-0-0 (16 KOs)
2.	**CHRIS JOHN** 45-0-2 (22 KOs)
3.	**ORLANDO SALIDO** 36-11-2 (24 KOs)
4.	**JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** 31-1-0 (28 KOs)
5.	**DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** 41-4-0 (34 KOs)
6.	**CRISTOBAL CRUZ** 39-12-3 (23 KOs)
7.	**RAFAEL MARQUEZ** 40-7-0 (36 KOs)
8.	**JHONNY GONZALEZ** 50-7-0 (44 KOs)
9.	**MIKEY GARCIA** 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
10.	**BILL DIB** 33-1-0 (20 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA** 39-4-3 (24 KOs)
2.	**RICO RAMOS** 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
3.	**AKIFUMA SHIMODA** 23-3-1 (10 KOs)
4.	**POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM** 45-2-0 (31 KOs)
5.	**TAKALANI NDLOVU** 33-6-0 (18 KOs)
6.	**GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX** 8-0-0 (6 KOs)
7.	**STEVE MOLITOR** 34-2-0 (12 KOs)
8.	**JORGE ARCE** 59-6-2 (45 KOs)
9.	**WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.** 21-1-1 (18 KOs)
10.	**MASAAKI SERIE** 20-4-0 (9 KOs)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**NONITO DONAIRE** 27-1-0 (18 KOs)
2.	**ANSELMO MORENO** 31-1-1 (11 KOs)
3.	**ABNER MARES** 22-0-1 (13 KOs)
4.	**JOSEPH AGBEKO** 28-3-0 (22 KOs)
5.	**VIC DARCHINYAN** 37-3-1 (27 KOs)
6.	**ERIC MOREL** 45-2-0 (23 KOs)
7.	**YONNHY PEREZ** 20-2-1 (14 KOs)
8.	**KOKI KAMEDA** 26-1-0 (16 KOs)
9.	**MALCOLM TUNACAO** 29-2-3 (18 KOs)
10.	**SHINSUKE YAMANAKA** 15-0-2 (11 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**OMAR NARVAEZ** 35-1-2 (19 KOs)
2.	**SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI** 20-4-1 (7 KOs)
3.	**TOMONOBU SHIMIZU** 19-3-1 (9 KOs)
4.	**HUGO CAZARES** 36-7-2 (26 KOs)
5.	**TOMAS ROJAS** 36-13-1 (24 KOs)
6.	**YOTA SATO** 23-2-1 (12 KOs)
7.	**TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA** 18-2-0 (12 KOs)
8.	**CESAR SEDA** 21-1-0 (15 KOs)
9.	**DAIKI KAMEDA** 22-2-0 (14 KOs)
10.	**NOBUO NASHIRO** 15-4-1 (9 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C	**PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** 83-3-1 (45 KOs)
1.	**HERNAN MARQUEZ** 32-2-0 (25 KOs)
2.	**MORUTI MTHALANE** 28-2-0 (19 KOs)
3.	**BRIAN VILORIA** 29-3-0 (16 KOs)
4.	**MILAN MELINDO** 25-0-0 (9 KOs)
5.	**ROCKY FUENTES** 29-6-2 (17 KOs)
6.	**JULIO CESAR MIRANDA** 36-6-1 (29 KOs)
7.	**LUIS CONCEPCION** 23-3-0 (18 KOs)
8.	**JUAN CARLOS REVECO** 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
9.	**TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI** 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
10.	**EDGAR SOSA** 43-7-0 (26 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**ADRIAN HERNANDEZ** 22-1-1 (14 KOs)
2.	**GILBERTO KEB BAAS** 35-21-4 (22 KOs)
3.	**ULISES SOLIS** 34-2-3 (21 KOs)
4.	**ROMAN GONZALEZ** 30-0-0 (25 KOs)
5.	**LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE** 49-10-2 (18 KOs)
6.	**DONNIE NIETES** 29-1-3 (16 KOs)
7.	**MASAYUKI KURODA** 21-3-0 (13 KOs)
8.	**RYO MIYAZAKI** 15-0-3 (9 KOs)
9.	**RAMON HIRALES** 16-3-1 (9 KOs)
10.	**JOSE ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ** 27-0-0 (27 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**NKOSINATHI JOYI** 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
2.	**KAZUTO IOKA** 8-0-0 (5 KOs)
3.	**MOISES FUENTES** 14-1-0 (6 KOs)
4.	**RAUL GARCIA** 30-2-1 (18 KOs)
5.	**JUAN PALACIOS** 29-3-0 (22 KOs)
6.	**WANHENG MENAYOTHIN** 18-0-0 (5 KOs)
7.	**DENVER CUELLO** 29-4-6 (19 KOs)
8.	**KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA** 24-4-0 (10 KOs)
9.	**FLORANTE CONDES** 25-6-1 (21 KOs)
10.	**AKIRA YAEGASHI** 15-2-0 (8 KOs)

90TH ANNIVERSARY

A CELEBRATION

WORDS: **DON STRADLEY**

In a way, THE RING owes its existence to Jack Dempsey. When the magazine first appeared in 1922, boxing was bigger than it had ever been, creating a demand for more coverage. The reason for boxing's surge in popularity was Dempsey.

The first fighter presented with THE RING championship belt, Jack Dempsey was to boxing what Babe Ruth was to baseball. He had the "it" factor. Part of it was the way he fought – others boxed, but Dempsey fought. His most memorable fights were surreal in their violence, with men falling out of rings or succumbing to bloody beatings.

Even his appearance was stirring. Broad-shouldered, unshaven and sunburned, with just a whiff of the Wild West behind him, Dempsey was a vision of untamed horsepower. That he became a major American success story struck a nerve with adults, while he also embodied that favorite of childhood fantasies – the giant killer. He was no saint, and there were plenty of scandals throughout his career, but he withstood bad press just as he withstood the cosmic blasts of Luis Firpo at The Polo Grounds.

Dempsey understood the effect he had on people. After boxing, he owned a successful restaurant on Broadway, the street of dreams. He'd greet customers with a simple, "Hiya pal." He'd pose for photos by placing his fist playfully against the chins of his admirers, the same fist that had ruined opponents. It was boxing's version of the laying-on of hands.

From Dempsey we learned that the boxing business thrived when there was a single, recognizable tough guy at the top. Boxing's power brokers have carried on since the 1920s, but like Hollywood producers keeping a movie franchise alive, the key was to find a suitable person for the lead role. At various times the part has gone to Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali, Ray Leonard, and Mike Tyson. When there wasn't a key figure for the press and public to follow, the business stumbled a bit. But as long as there was someone up there with star quality, there was a trickle-down effect and everybody benefited. Even magazines.

In the following section you will find a decade-by-decade look at some of the milestones witnessed by THE RING since it was launched 90 years ago. There hasn't always been a charismatic star to lead the pack, but, as these pages can attest, he's never more than a few years away. Fortunately, there will always be some youngster somewhere who realizes that he can hit the heavy bag and make it weep. There's probably one learning the trade right now. He may be in Philadelphia, or he may be in Thailand, but he's already thinking big, dreaming the dreams that Jack Dempsey dreamed.

TOP 10 POUND FOR POUND

Historian and writer Cliff Rold's list of the best fighters since the founding of THE RING Magazine in 1922.

1. **Sugar Ray Robinson**
2. **Harry Greb**
3. **Henry Armstrong**
4. **Ezzard Charles**
5. **Roberto Duran**
6. **Willie Pep**
7. **Muhammad Ali**
8. **Sugar Ray Leonard**
9. **Joe Louis**
10. **Pernell Whitaker**

LINKED FOREVER

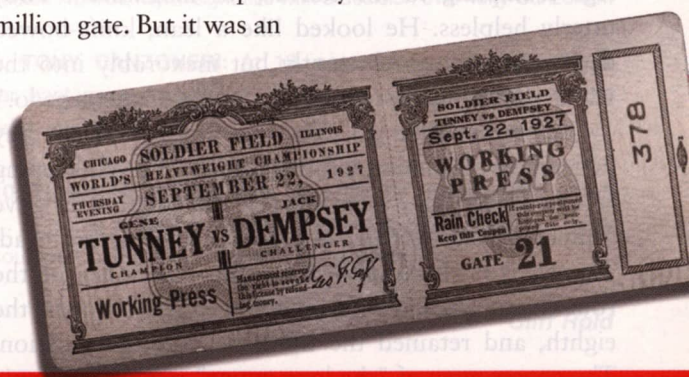
The long count is underway.

When Jack Dempsey learned of Gene Tunney's death in 1978, he said only, "Now I feel alone."

Their names had been linked for decades, their two bouts being among the most revered memories of the Jazz Age. Together, they had made The Roaring Twenties roar.

Their first bout, which packed 120,757 customers into Philadelphia's Sesquicentennial Stadium in September 1926, saw Dempsey beaten as much by his own ring rust as by Tunney's pile-driver jab. Dempsey had put the championship on ice for three years while he lived a celebrity's life in Hollywood; he was so ill-conditioned that Tunney beat him with shocking ease. Dempsey, his face punched raw, lost a 10-round decision and the championship. His gallant effort won the public's heart, though, especially when he told his wife, "Honey, I forgot to duck."

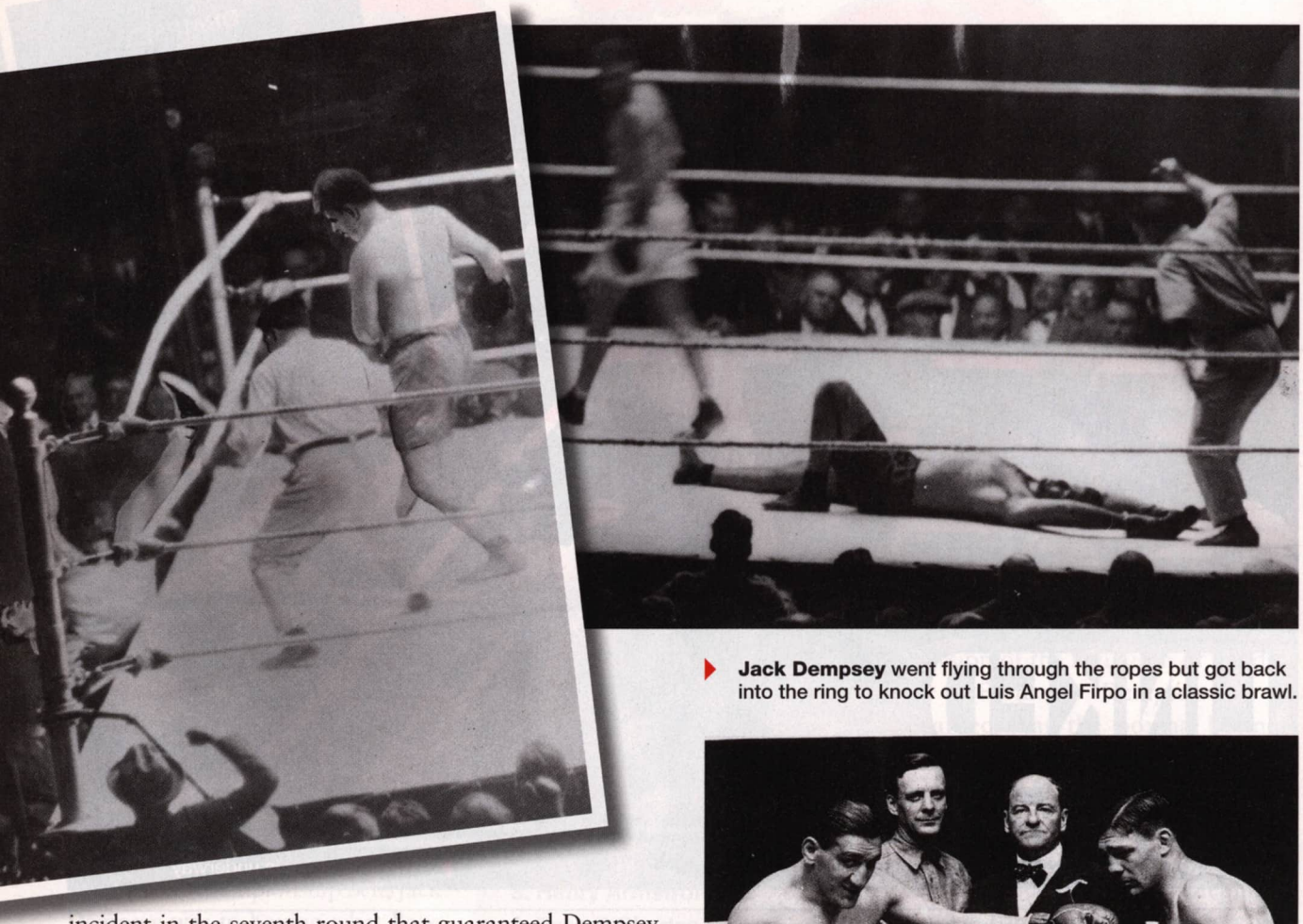
The rematch was, perhaps, the biggest sporting event of the decade. Taking place in September 1927 at Soldiers Field in Chicago, it drew another 104,000 customers, a vast radio audience and a previously unheard of $2 million gate. But it was an



RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

1922 – Sports journalist Nat Fleischer, with the financial backing of promoter Tex Rickard, launches THE RING magazine on Feb. 15. Jack Dempsey receives the first RING belt shortly after the launch.

1925 – Fleischer institutes the first boxing ratings, which are sponsored by Rickard and inspired by Walter Camp's All-America football team.



Jack Dempsey went flying through the ropes but got back into the ring to knock out Luis Angel Firpo in a classic brawl.

Harry Greb (right) was one of the most-dominating fighters in history.

incident in the seventh round that guaranteed Dempsey and Tunney would be joined forever.

Behind on points, Dempsey finally struck Tunney with a fireball of a left hook followed by a barrage of lefts and rights. Tunney finally knew how it felt to be mauled by The Manassa Mauler.

"He sagged," wrote journalist Ed Fitzgerald, "pawing instinctively at the ropes, missing them, his legs crumpling to the canvas, his magnificent body utterly helpless. He looked like a lean, knife-bowed destroyer settling reluctantly but inexorably into the water after being blown open ... by an enemy torpedo."

But rather than go to a neutral corner, Dempsey lingered over Tunney, panting and wild-eyed, keeping referee Dave Barry from starting his count. This gave Tunney several additional seconds to clear his head. Tunney rose, backpedaled for the remainder of the round, put Dempsey down for a quick count in the eighth, and retained the title via 10-round decision. The controversy of "the long count" remained a topic of conversation for years, ensuring that while the title may have stayed with Tunney, the decade would always belong to Dempsey.

THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

Sept. 14, 1923: Dempsey knocks Louis Firpo down seven times on his way to a second round KO win, but not before a hair-raising moment when Dempsey found himself flying out of the ring onto the laps of surprised reporters.

July 31, 1928: Tunney retires as heavyweight champion.

Other happenings: Benny Leonard retires in 1925 after holding the lightweight championship for more than seven years ... Pancho Villa becomes the Philippines' first boxing champion, stopping legendary flyweight champion Jimmy Wilde in seven rounds ... Although 20-round bouts would occasionally be scheduled, there is a trend toward 15, 12 and 10-round bouts ... Harry Greb, the great middleweight, dies after an operation to repair his nose.

Two all-time greats – **Mickey Walker (left) and Harry Greb** – agree to fight in 1925. Greb won a unanimous decision.

TOP 10 (1922-29)

1. HARRY GREB
Decade record: 66-6-2 (53 no-decisions)
Titles: World middleweight (1923-26)
Notable opponents of the 20s: (Tommy Gibbons, Kid Norfolk, Gene Tunney, Tommy Loughran, Johnny Wilson, Tiger Flowers, Jimmy Slattery, Mickey Walker, Maxie Rosenbloom)
Background: The "Human Windwill" beat Wilson for the middleweight crown, defended successfully against Walke, and lost the title to a fellow legend in Flowers. Greb officially beat Tunney, Loughran, Gibbons and Slattery during the decade, along with unofficial news verdicts over Flowers, Norfolk and Rosenbloom, mostly while blind in his right eye.

2. BENNY LEONARD: Great lightweight champion bested Hall of Famers Rocky Kansas and Lew Tendler ... nearly toppled welterweight king Jack Britton.

3. GENE TUNNEY: Best light heavyweight of the 20s settled for Dempsey's heavyweight crown ... suffered only one official defeat, to Greb.

4. MICKEY WALKER: "Toy Bulldog" ended Britton's reign at welterweight ... controversially took the middleweight crown off Flowers ... bested top light heavyweights Mike McTigue and Paul Berlenbach.

5. PANCHO VILLA: Stopped former bantamweight champ Johnny Buff ... knocked out Jimmy Wilde for the flyweight crown ... also beat future bantamweight king Bud Taylor on points ... died tragically at 24.

6. TOMMY LOUGHRAN: Struggled with Greb ... looked the lesser against Tunney ... but the better of Mike McTigue, Mickey Walker, Jimmy Slattery and Jim Braddock as light heavyweight king from 1927 to 1929.

7. JACK DEMPSEY: Officially fought only nine times in the 20s ... Firpo win remains an action standard ... never fought leading black contender Harry Wills ... but for a long count, he might have been the first to regain the throne.

8. BUD TAYLOR: "Terror of Terre Haute" gave Jimmy McLarnin his first two losses ... news win in one of three fights with Villa ... won the vacant NBA bantamweight title with a decision over Tony Canzoneri.

9. TONY CANZONERI: At 19, came close to besting Taylor for bantamweight honors ... defeated Johnny Dundee for the featherweight crown.

10. TIGER FLOWERS: Beat Greb for the middleweight crown ... by some accounts should have kept it versus Walker ... slick southpaw had a chin vulnerable to the scale.

Cliff Rold

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

1926 – Rickard agrees to sell the ratings for $5,000 to a national magazine but nixes the deal when THE RING threatens to take him to court.

1928 – THE RING initiates a tradition by naming Gene Tunney Fighter of the Year. More awards are added over time.

FIRST ISSUE

By: **Ted Carroll** / THE RING: **February 1922**

SPORTS in America, in all the world, in fact, have taken on a new aspect, and this is especially true of boxing. Times are changing in all things, but in sports the transition has been rapid within the last few years: the world is seeking to spend its reaction from the stern pursuits of wartime in sports of one sort or another. The demand has been for more and better sports, cleaner and more upbuilding sports, and every agency that could aid has been called upon to further this end.

Thus it is peculiarly timely for the appearance of a magazine devoted to one of the most ancient, most widely practiced of the sporting arts—boxing—and in making its bow to the devotees of pugilism here and abroad THE RING believes it can be of growing value to the great game, can help lift it to the high plane it has so long been seeking, so gamely endeavoring to reach, and the plane it so highly deserves.

A few years back along the rough road that boxing has traveled it was not easy to speak more than just a kind word for the game. It was classed as brutal, as debasing, followed only by the rough, the uncultured, the vicious. It was no easy task to dispel this vision of boxing, and it is likely that the game would long have felt this unjust stigma but for a concurrence of events that in bold strokes wiped away for all time this stain.

Rejuvenated by World War

THE climax came in that drab April when America entered the World War, unprepared but unafraid, and endeavored to match in a woefully short period any army as skilled as those where military training had been a recognized institution for a half century.

But our boys, unschooled in the military arts, unfitted by temperament, by character, for fostering brutal warfare, had one sublime attribute that no other nation's sons could boast of, an almost common knowledge of the manly art of self-defense. Not a few were skilled boxers, others were less skilled, some dire novices, yet in each was the common fundamental knowledge of what boxing meant, how it was performed, skilfully or otherwise.

And, recognizing this, American military authorities based their training for soldiers upon boxing. It proved to be the greatest foundation a military machine could have had. It worked two-fold—it provided the physical development sought and mental relaxation, both of prime necessity in the case at hand.

Fists come to the Rescue

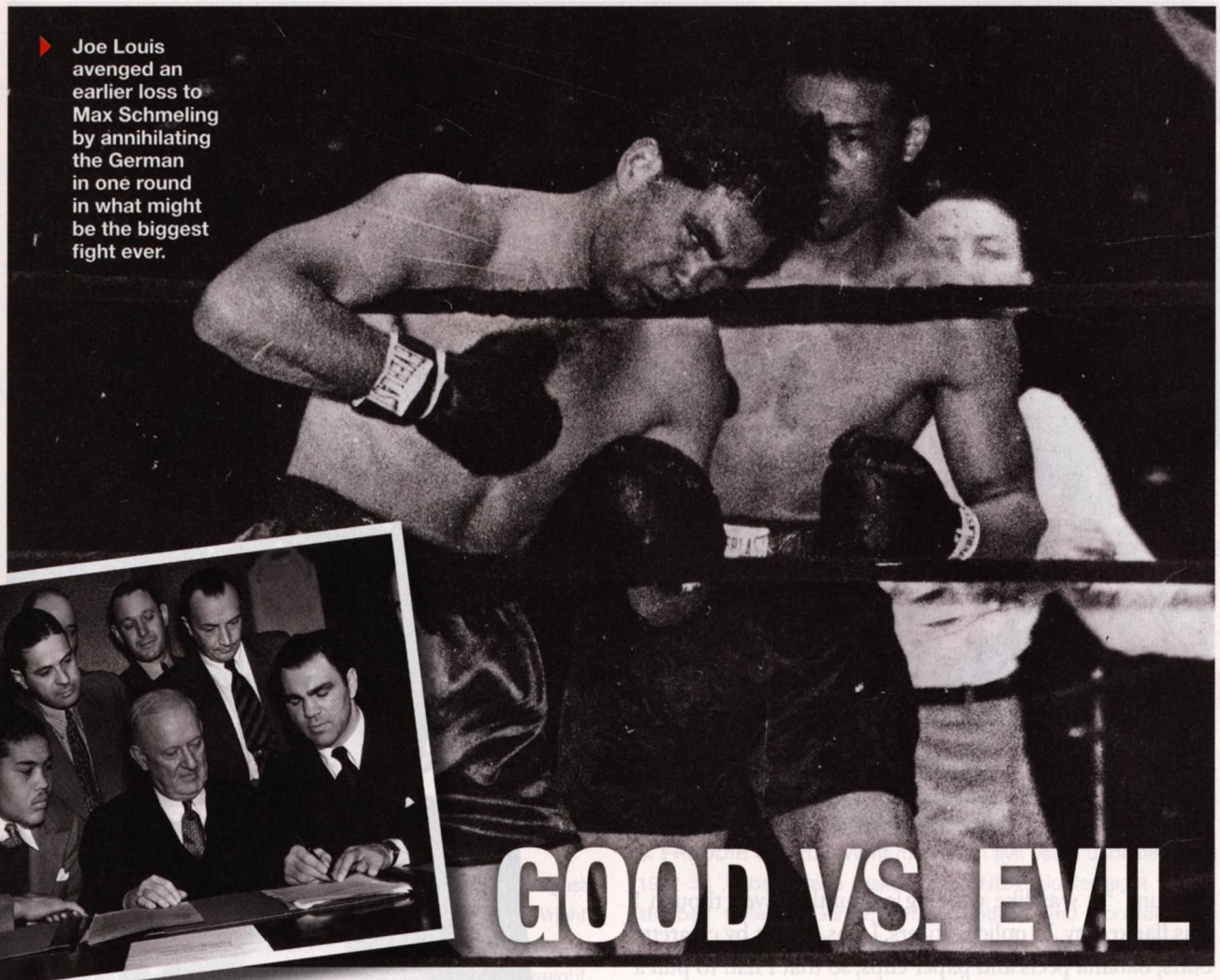
NOW skip a bit further along the way. The American Engineers are at Cambrai. Armed with picks and shovels and transits and plumbs, they were preparing for the advance of the allied armies, doing just a trifle in a complexly organized drive. Suddenly a foraging enemy battalion swings across the sector. There is no call to arms for the Americans. They have no arms, and if they did time was too precious to seek them.

But they did have one great and glorious God-bestowed gift, the ability to use their own muscular arms, which at that particular moment were bared to the elbows, toiling in the much of French soil. Grasping shovel or pick, or bare-handed, the Americans swung into action. Quick as the descending streak of chain lighting, forceful as the overpowering impact of a gigantic sledge upon a heated bit of iron.

THOSE American fists swung through the air. Almost soft were the noises of the impacts. At first the enemy fired and yet could not hold back this host of unsheathed arms, of flaying fists, and when the mass came pouring in, flailing and striking with bony knuckles, the enemy dropped his arms of steel, primed with fire, laden with lead, and fled as from the supernatural, unbelieving that man could maim so quickly without weapons that shot or cut, in so short a time.

Thus was boxing, manly art of defense, regenerated.

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/f0AhQ on RingTV.com.



Joe Louis avenged an earlier loss to Max Schmeling by annihilating the German in one round in what might be the biggest fight ever.

GOOD VS. EVIL

World War II had not officially broken out when America's Joe Louis and Germany's Max Schmeling signed for their 1938 rematch, but the Nazis' use of thuggery and anti-Semitism was no secret; whispers of war were growing louder.

Since Schmeling had knocked out Louis in their first bout, he'd been embraced by German leader Adolph Hitler as evidence of German superiority. This was not Schmeling's doing. Although he had attended functions hosted by Hitler, he had no real allegiance to the Nazis. Schmeling even had a Jewish manager. To the American press and public, however, Schmeling was just another of Hitler's stooges.

Louis' embarrassing 1936 loss to Schmeling was not only a blemish on his record; it had largely affected black Americans who regarded him as an inspiration. To say the rematch was "a natural" is an understatement. In terms of drama and social significance, boxing has never topped the Louis-Schmeling rematch. In fact, few sporting events have ever earned such worldwide attention.

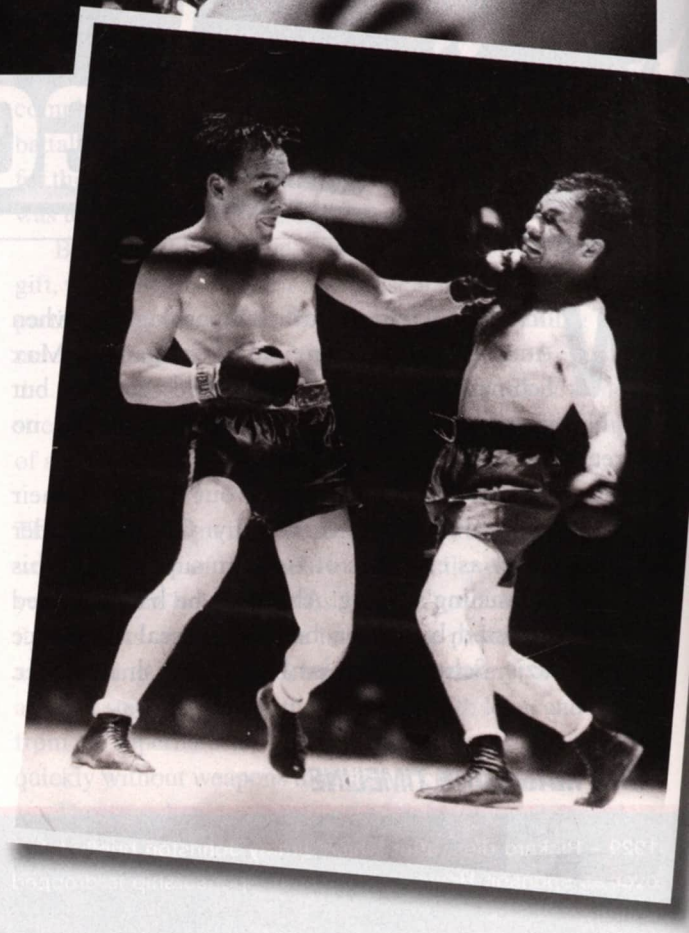
"As I became visible to the crowd, all hell broke loose," Schmeling wrote of the history-making night at Yankee

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

1929 – Rickard dies, after which Jimmy Johnston briefly takes over as sponsor. However, over time, sponsorship is dropped entirely.

1938 – Fleischer writes and publishes *Black Dynamite: The Story of the Negro in Boxing*, a pioneering work. The final, comprehensive edition is published in 1947.

Above, a reported 70,000-plus packed Yankee Stadium to watch the second **Joe Louis-Max Schmeling** fight. Below, all-time greats Jimmy McLarnin (left) and Tony Canzoneri split two classic fights.



Stadium. "It was like walking a gauntlet. Even though I was flanked by 25 police officers, I was still hit by cigarette butts, banana peels and paper cups, so that I had to pull a towel over my head just to reach the ring safely."

But all Schmeling found in the ring was Louis, waiting like a grim avenger. Louis cornered Schmeling and knocked him to the canvas three times before referee Arthur Donovan stopped the bout at 2:04 of the first round. The German radio feed was cut off so Hitler's public wouldn't hear of Schmeling's humiliating defeat.

While Schmeling recovered in a nearby hospital, the celebrations in American cities became the stuff of legend. In Detroit, Louis' home city, one banner read "JOE KNOCKED OLD HITLER COLD."

Joe Louis Jr. described his father's accomplishments succinctly. "What my father did was enable white America to think of him as an American, not as a black. By winning, he became white America's first black hero."

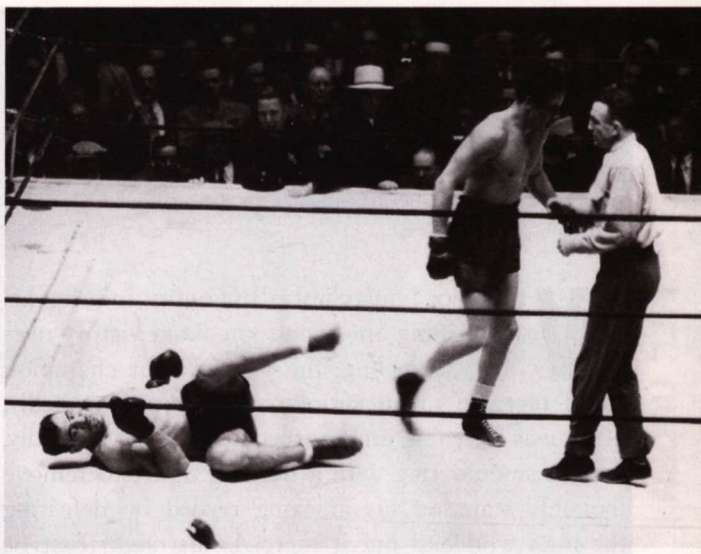
THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

June 13, 1935: James J. Braddock scores one of the

biggest upsets in boxing history by defeating world heavyweight champion Max Baer by a 15-round unanimous decision.

May 31, 1938: Henry Armstrong, already wearing the featherweight and lightweight belts, makes history by becoming the first fighter to hold world titles in three divisions at the same time, defeating welterweight champion Barney Ross by a 15- round split decision.

Other happenings: Featherweight Kid Chocolate becomes the first world champion from Cuba ... Sixto Escobar becomes the first world champion from Puerto Rico ... Tony Canzoneri and Jimmy McLarnin engage in one of the great trilogies of all time ... Primo Carnera, with a little help from organized crime figures, becomes the first Italian to win the heavyweight title.



The giant **Primo Carnera** was no match for Max Baer in 1934.

TOP 10 (1930-39)

1. HENRY ARMSTRONG
Decade record: 103-12-7
Titles: World featherweight (1937-38); world welterweight (1938-40); world lightweight (1938-39).
Notable opponents of the 30s: Baby Arizmendi, Midget Wolgast, Juan Zurita, Frankie Klick, Benny Bass, Petey Sarron, Chalky Wright, Barney Ross, Lou Ambers, Ceferino Garcia.
Background: Armstrong is famous for holding the featherweight, welterweight, and lightweight titles at the same time. He defeated Hall of Famers Ambers and Ross for the straps at light- and welterweight, and came up just shy of winning a share of the middleweight title against Ceferino Garcia. Armstrong would ultimately fight into the 1940s to make a record 18 consecutive defenses of the welterweight title.

2. JOE LOUIS: Avenged only loss of the decade by toppling Max Schmeling in one ... 40-1 through 1939 with KO's of Max Baer, Jack Sharkey, Primo Carnera, Paulino Uzcudun, and Jim Braddock for the heavyweight title.

3. BARNEY ROSS: Ross won the lightweight and jr. welterweight crowns from Tony Canzoneri in 1933 ... added the welterweight title twice from Jimmy McLarnin.

4. TONY CANZONERI: Won the lightweight and jr. welterweight titles twice apiece ... picked up wins against Hall of Famers Benny Bass, Jack Berg, Kid Chocolate, Baby Arizmendi, Lou Ambers, and Jimmy McLarnin.

5. JIMMY MCLARNIN: Beat Ross and Canzoneri once each ... blasted Young Corbett III in one for his first welterweight crown ... also bested Sammy Mandell, Lou Amber, and Billy Petrolle.

6. FREDDIE STEELE: Went more than five years unbeaten from 1932-38 ... beat Babe Risko for the NBA middleweight title ... stopped Ceferino Garcia, Vince Dundee, Fred Apostoli, Gus Lesnevich, and Ken Overlin.

7. PANAMA AL BROWN: Nearly six-foot bantamweight reigned as champion from 1929-35 ... often competed with lightweights and beat hard men like Victor Perez, Balthazar Sangchili, and Pete Sanstol.

8. BENNY LYNCH: Thrilling Scotsman's wins over Jackie Brown, Jackie Jurich, and Small Montana spoke to greatness ... 1937 flyweight title knockout of Peter Kane in front of some 40,000 in Glasgow made him a legend.

9. JACK BERG: Went 11-0 in 1930 with wins over Canzoneri, Petrolle, Kid Chocolate, and Mushy Callahan (for the jr. welterweight crown) ... 1931 knockout loss to Canzoneri was a turning point at the elite level.

10. KID CHOCOLATE: With a share of the featherweight crown and lengthy run as jr. lightweight champion, Chocolate posted signature wins over Benny Bass and Fidel LaBarba.

Cliff Rold

A GREAT CHAMPION

By: **Ted Carroll** / THE RING: **September 1938**

WHEN Joe Louis climbed out of the ring after his astonishing one-round knockout victory over Max Schmeling, the heavyweight champion stood revealed in an entirely new light. Outwardly, Louis was the calm, unperturbed athlete, but inwardly, he was smouldering with a burning desire to remove the only stain on his amazing record by defeating the man who had put it there. Louis might best be likened to a long silent volcano suddenly erupting with devastating results that night of June 22nd. Not even the uncontrolled Dempsey in his prime ever unloosed a flood of punches like the barrage that swept Max to such swift disaster.

After a few seconds of preliminary fiddling around, a storm of lefts and rights broke about the head and body of the luckless Schmeling, as Louis flashed a "killer instinct" that many had claimed was lacking in his make-up.

Most amazing sidelight of the brief encounter was the lack of respect Louis showed for his erstwhile conqueror. It has many times been hinted that boxers of Louis' race always retain a certain respect for men who have beaten them, but Louis' cold disdain for the German was a living refutation of this nonsense. This misconception regarding Negro boxers is further proved a fallacy in Nat Fleischer's latest book, *Black Dynamite*, the most complete and comprehensive history of the Negro in the prize ring yet attempted. In this authoritative tome, THE RING editor definitely proves, by citing individuals and performances, that courage of the prize ring brand is strictly a matter of the individual, and that no race or nationality is either lacking or distinguished particularly with this quality.

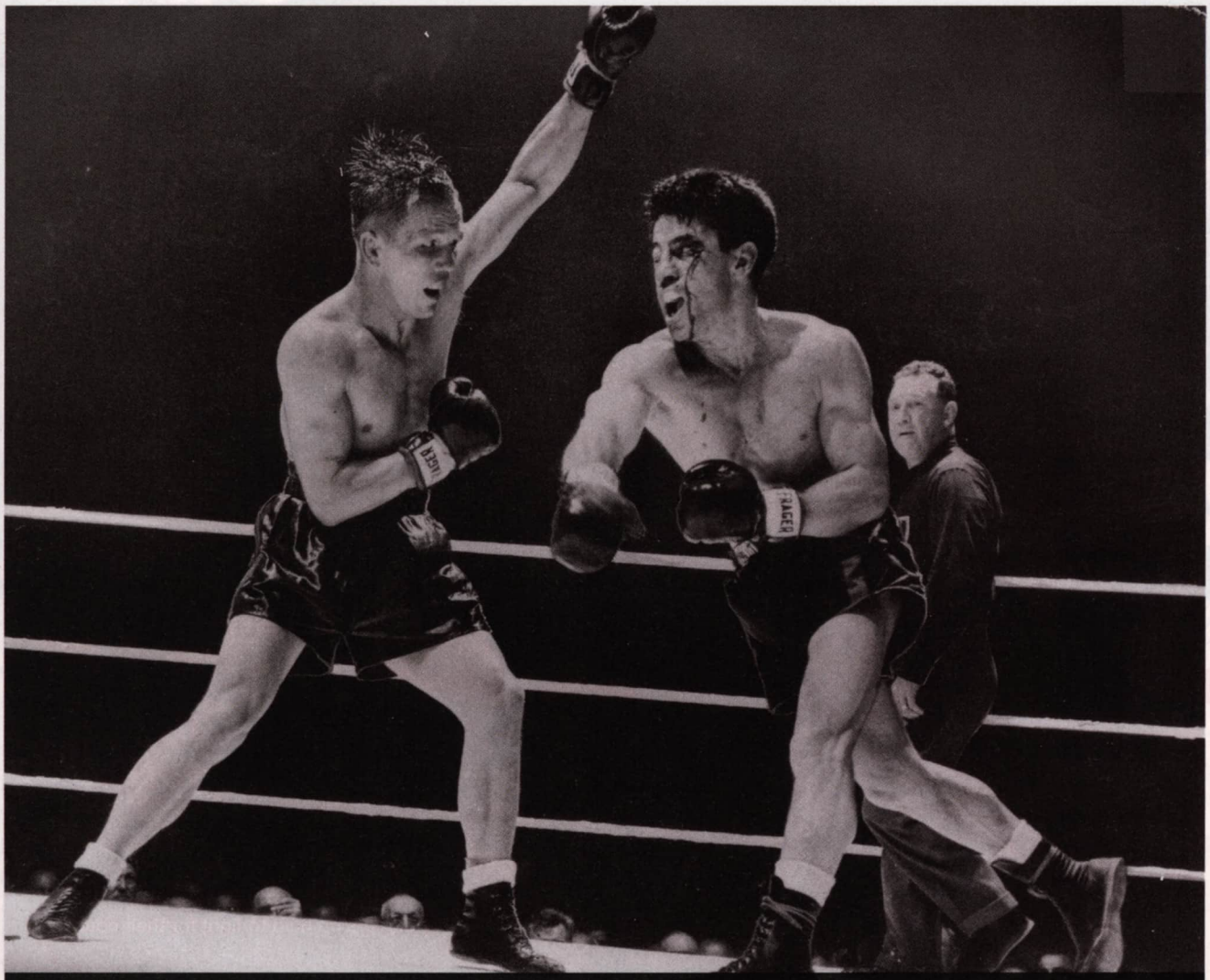
Louis lived up to his promise to walk right into the German's fire. It might have been Freddy Bartholomew before him for all the regard that the frozen faced champion showed for the challenger.

LOUIS' punching power has been recognized and duly acclaimed since his first splurge into the headlines, but prior to the Schmeling slaughter, most of his lethal ability seemed to be concentrated in his left hook. Surprisingly, however, in his most recent embroglio, his crushing right. It was not the vaunted left that proved to be the payoff punch. Major Will Corum, brilliant and enjoyable sports columnist for the New York Journal-American, commented on this in this classic manner: "Joe, the sucker for a right, turned out to be a socker with one".... and this tells the story to perfection.

The champion's numbing lefts to the body dressed the Uhlan up for the kill, but in every case his short, powerful rights sent Schmeling to the canvas each time the German was floored. This tends to show that as a two-handed hitter Louis has had no equals among the great punchers of the past.

Dempsey, Langford, Berlenbach and Jeffries, for example, relied upon the left hand mainly to administer the coup-de-grace. Carpentier, Baer, Firpo, Peter Maher, Gunboat Smith, old John L. and Schmeling himself were all good hitters whose power was packed in only one mitt, the right. Only Fitz, who, old-timers tell us, could dispense a brand of knockout drops with either hand, alone seems capable of disputing Louis' right to be considered the most dangerous two-fisted hitter who ever stepped into the ring.

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/wSUpn on RingTV.com.



This image of Tony Zale (left) and Rocky Graziano gives you an idea of how savage their epic trilogy was.

SAVAGE SERIES

They weren't fights. They were ritualistic bloodlettings. They involved two hard men who had taken the sweet science of boxing and hurled it to the wind, preferring instead to leap at each other like dogs in the pit. Even the still photos that appeared in newspapers were frightening, the anguish on the faces of Rocky Graziano and Tony Zale almost painful to witness.

There were other memorable rivalries during the 1940s, but what Zale and Graziano created together was just a bit crazier than the rest.

"They are classics of the genre, like certain Renaissance triptychs," recalled *The New York Times'* Ira Berkow in 1990. Berkow remembered seeing one of the bouts as a boy. "The memory of the savagery of that fight is spine-chilling."

Zale, eight years older than Graziano, was a serious-minded mid-westerner who had worked in the steel mills of Gary, Ind., and had recently completed a four-year Navy hitch. Graziano was a reformed New York street hood, who threw his right hand like he was heaving a brick through a store window at 2 in the morning. After their retirements, Zale lived a quiet life; Graziano went into show business.

In the ring, though, they were made for each other. "I wanted to kill him," Graziano said after the second bout. "I got nothing against him. He's a nice guy. I like him, but I wanted to kill him."

The first bout took place in New York's Yankee Stadium in September 1946. Zale, the middleweight

Many fighters, including rivals **Joe Louis (left) and Billy Conn**, put their boxing careers on hold to fight for their country in World War II.

champion, was dropped in the first, and for the next few rounds could barely withstand Graziano's insane fury. After the fifth, though, Graziano was exhausted. Zale stopped him in the sixth. Zale could barely stand up during the post-fight press conference. He mumbled, "Good living did it."

The rematch took place in Chicago in July 1947. This time the roles were reversed, with Zale torturing Graziano, cutting him badly, until Graziano unleashed his own horrific force and stopped Zale in the sixth to take the title. The rubber match landed in Newark, N.J., June 1948. Zale stopped Graziano in three, knocking him cold and regaining the championship.

The Zale-Graziano trilogy, which swept THE RING'S Fight of the Year honors for three consecutive years, reflected post-war American exuberance. The sport had been stifled during the war years; Zale and Graziano fought like men breaking free of shackles.

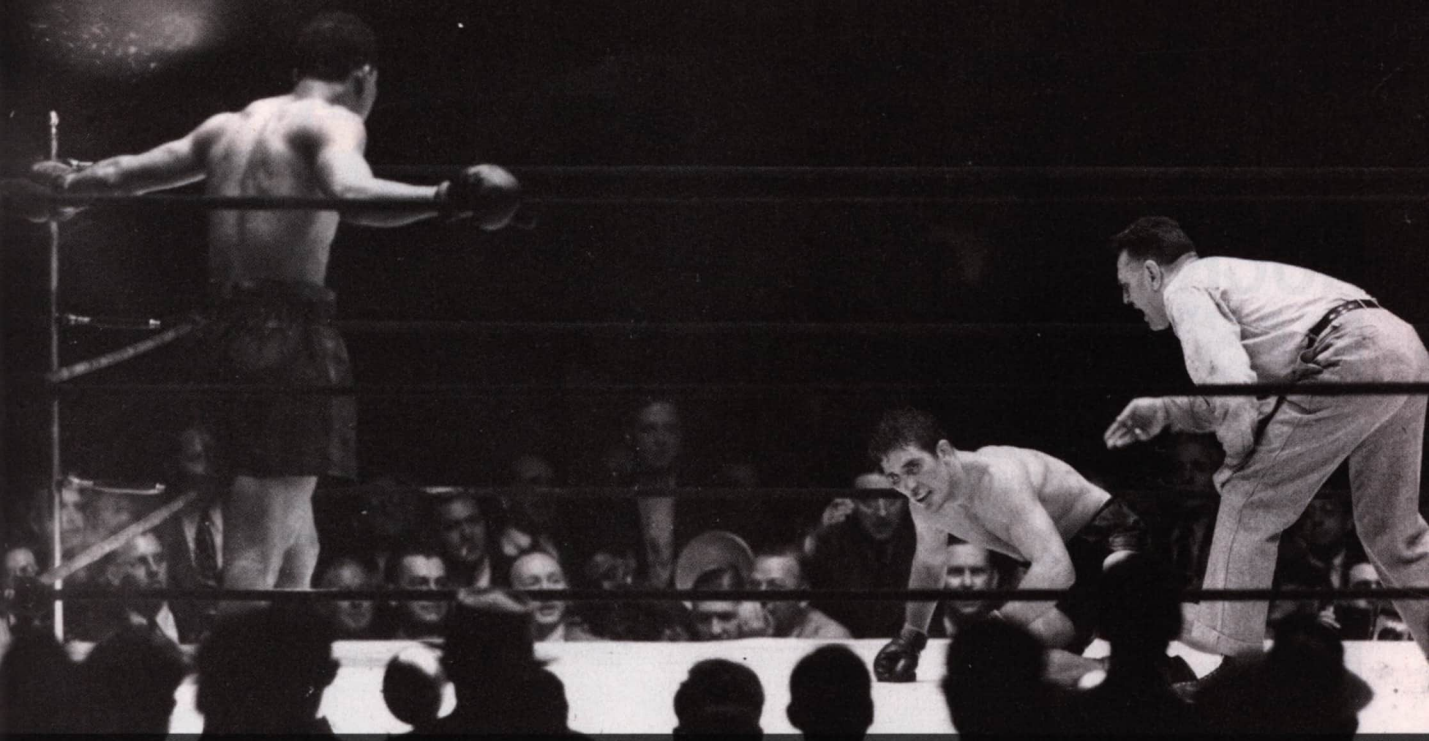
THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

June 18, 1941: Joe Louis rallies to stop Billy Conn in one of the great bouts of the era.

Nov. 20, 1942: Willie Pep wins the featherweight championship with a 15-round decision over Chalky Wright.

Dec. 20, 1945: Sugar Ray Robinson wins his first championship, defeating Tommy Bell by a 15-round unanimous decision for the vacant welterweight title.

Other happenings: Many champions leave the sport to take part in the American war effort ... Joe Louis announces his retirement in 1949, vacating the heavyweight championship after 11 years, six months, and a record 25 title defenses ... Ezzard Charles defeats Jersey Joe Walcott for the title vacated by Louis.



Billy Conn (right) was winning his first fight against Joe Louis until he got caught in the 13th round in 1941.

TOP 10 (1940-49)

1. SUGAR RAY ROBINSON
Decade Record: 101-1-2
Titles: World welterweight (1946-50)
Notable Opponents of the 40s: (Sammy Angott, Marty Servo, Fritzie Zivic, Jake LaMotta, Henry Armstrong, Tommy Bell, Georgie Abrams, Kid Gavilan)
Background: The consensus choice for greatest pound-for-pound fighter who ever lived won 40 in a row before a decision loss to Jake LaMotta. He wouldn't taste defeat again, competing against a who's who from lightweight to middleweight. He defeated Tommy Bell for the vacant welterweight title and won a pair of fiercely contested affairs, one a title defense, against Kid Gavilan.

2. EZZARD CHARLES: Faced arguably the best competition of the decade ... wins over Charley Burley, Jimmy Bivins, Lloyd Marshall, Archie Moore, and Joey Maxim from middleweight to heavyweight ... beat Jersey Joe Walcott for the vacant heavyweight crown.

3. WILLIE PEP: An absurd 134-1-1 when Sandy Saddler knocked him out in four rounds for the featherweight title ... six months later, he avenged the loss in a brilliant display.

4. JOE LOUIS: WW II robbed Louis of perhaps forty title defenses but furthered his place as a hero beyond race and set the stage for Jackie Robinson and the integration of sport ... in the ring were KOs of Billy Conn and Jersey Joe Walcott.

5. IKE WILLIAMS: Won share of the lightweight crown from Juan Zurita ... unified against Bob Montgomery ... wins over Beau Jack, Tippy Larkin, and Sammy Angott and future welterweight champs Johnny Bratton and Kid Gavilan.

6. MANUEL ORTIZ: Beat Lou Salica for the first of two bantamweight reigns ... in the first, Ortiz made 15 defenses ... beat Jackie Jurich, Jackie Paterson, split title fights with Harold Dade, and gave Willie Pep a tough go in non-title action.

7. SANDY SADDLER: KO of Pep for the featherweight title might have been enough to get him here ... wins over Harold Dade, Paddy DeMarco, and Joe Brown, and a version of the jr. lightweight crown, guaranteed it.

8. BILLY CONN: Got a lot of his best work done in the 30s but entered the 40s as light heavyweight champ ... defended against Gus Lesnevich ... had a series of wins over heavyweights and gave Louis an epic challenge.

9. JAKE LAMOTTA: First to defeat Robinson ... wins over Fritzie Zivic, Holman Williams, Bert Lytell, and Bob Satterfield ... won the middleweight crown from Marcel Cerdan.

10. MARCEL CERDAN: Got the better of Holman Williams in Paris ... beat Georgie Abrams in his U.S. debut ... forced the great Tony Zale's corner to surrender the middleweight crown before the 12th.

Cliff Rold

ROCKY MEETS HIS MASTER

WITH VICTORY IN HAND, GRAZIANO IS DROPPED FOR COUNT BY TONY ZALE IN THRILLING, VICIOUS BOUT FOR WORLD MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLE—RIGHT UNDER HEART FOLLOWED BY LEFT TO JAW, ENDS CONTEST AT YANKEE STADIUM

By: **Nat Fleischer** / THE RING: **December 1946**

IN AS SAVAGE a brawl as has been seen in a championship fight in many years, an affair that was a throwback to the bare-knuckle era of slashing, brutal slugging, Tony Zale proved his right to occupy the throne on which sat such immortals as Mysterious Billy Smith, Stanley Ketchel, Harry Greb and Bob Fitzsimmons, by scoring a sixth round knockout over Rocky Graziano in the Yankee Stadium. 39,827 persons had flocked to the home of the Yankees in anticipation of seeing a slugging match, but little did they expect that they would see two bulldogs tear into each other as they were unleashed at the clang of the opening gong and gave an exhibition of socking the likes of which have not been surpassed in any battle in many years.

The underdog, Tony Zale, came through and by his victory, he provided his right to a place among the high ranking middleweight kings of all time. The spectators who had paid a gross of $324,497 to see the shindig, left the stadium singing the praises of victor and vanquished with the remarkable performance of Zale receiving the greater attention. Tony, on the brink of defeat on several occasions, battered in the fifth round so badly he could scarcely get to his corner, his rubbery legs barely able to keep the champ in an erect position, demonstrated that with a fighting heart and the spirit to carry on even under the most adverse conditions, there is always a chance to turn defeat into victory.

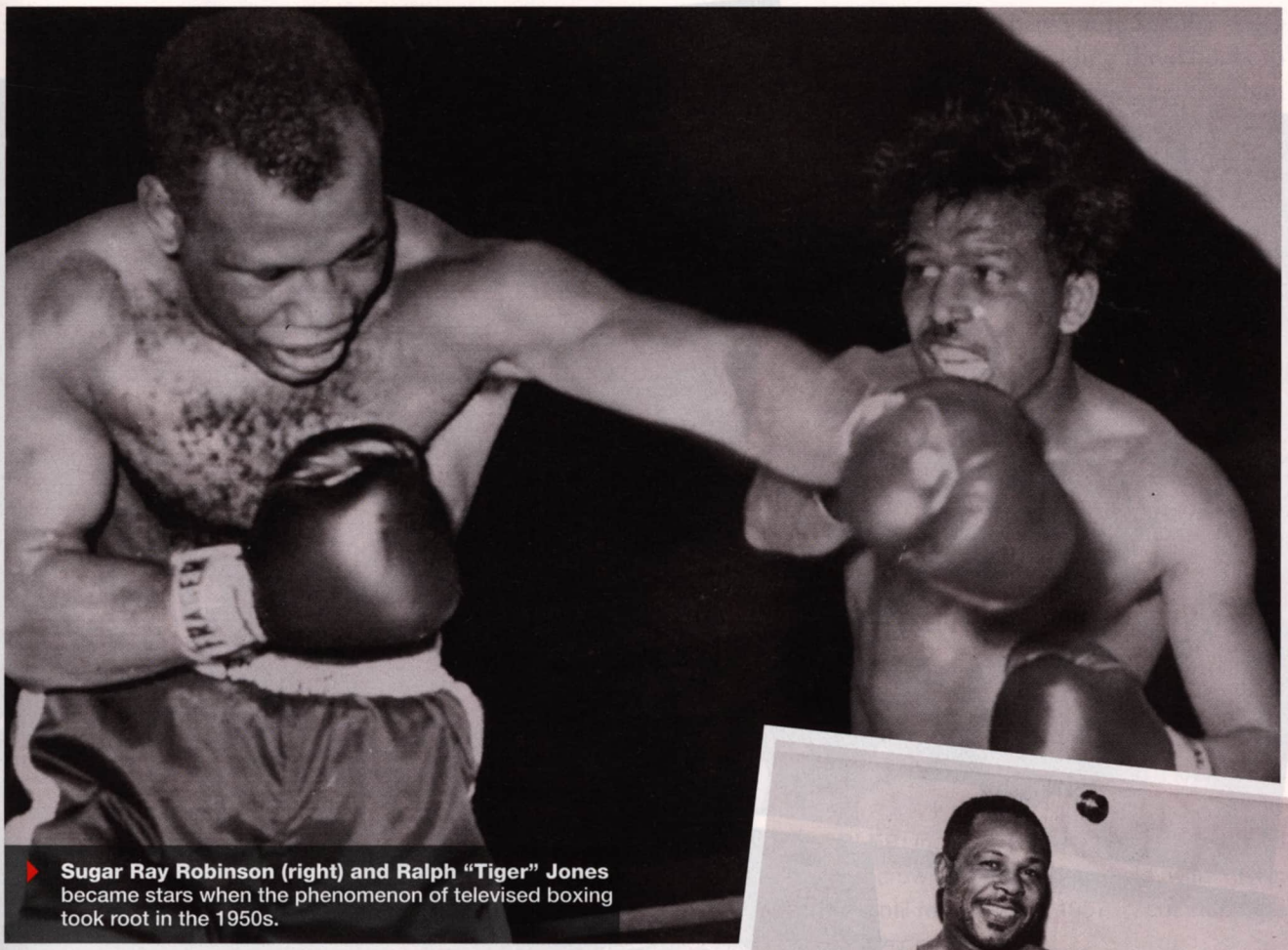
Most of the spectators didn't concede Tony that chance after the terrific beating he got in the fifth round. It didn't seem possible that he could go any further. But the champ apparently thought otherwise. In a pre-fight interview he declared that he expected to stop the challenger in the sixth session and his prediction came true despite the fact that he had broken a bone in his thumb as early as the second round.

Tony also bled badly from the mouth and nose, the result of a merciless barrage from Graziano's hammerlike fists.

A RIGHT under the heart did the trick, though a left to the side of the cheek near the temple was the finishing blow. Many of the scribes viewed the most devastating punch of the fight, the one that preceded, the kayo wallop, as a right to the solar plexus but they erred in their description. The punch that knocked out Jim Corbett and made famous the Fitzsimmons solar plexus blow, was a left to the body and there was no similarity between that and the one that put Rocky Graziano out of commission.

Until Zale connected with the haymaker that took all the wind out if his cocky and over-confident challenger, Rocky looked like a sure winner but one minute and 43 seconds after the heart punch had done its damage, the Gary, Indiana, titleholder was the victor by a kayo, and still the world middleweight king! He had accomplished what seemed only a few minutes previously, as the impossible!

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/mwYEc on RingTV.com.



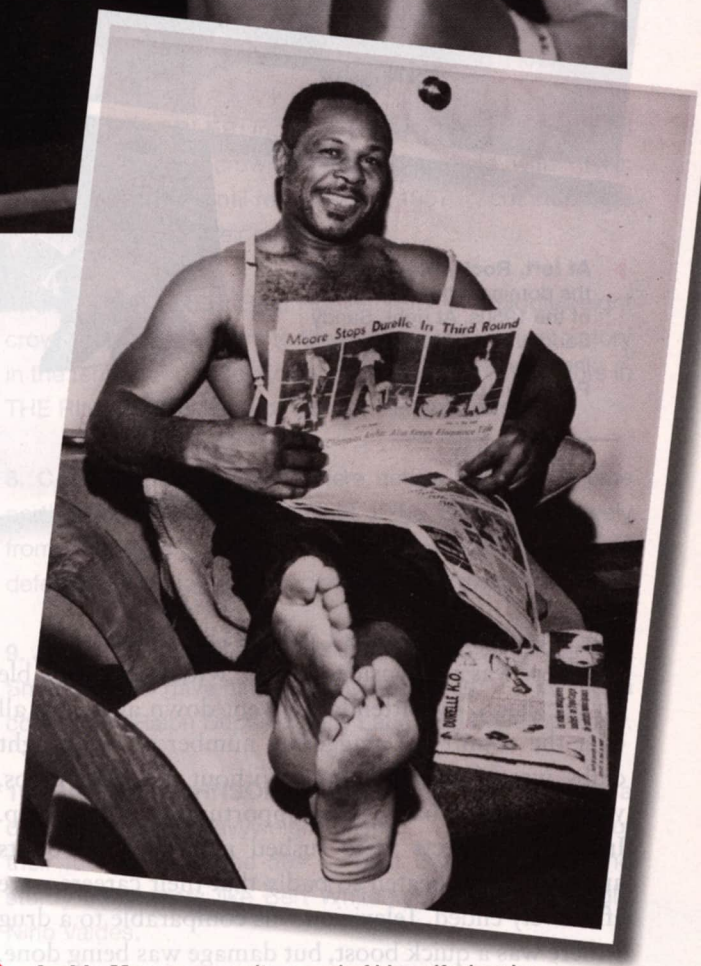
Sugar Ray Robinson (right) and Ralph "Tiger" Jones became stars when the phenomenon of televised boxing took root in the 1950s.

ON THE TUBE

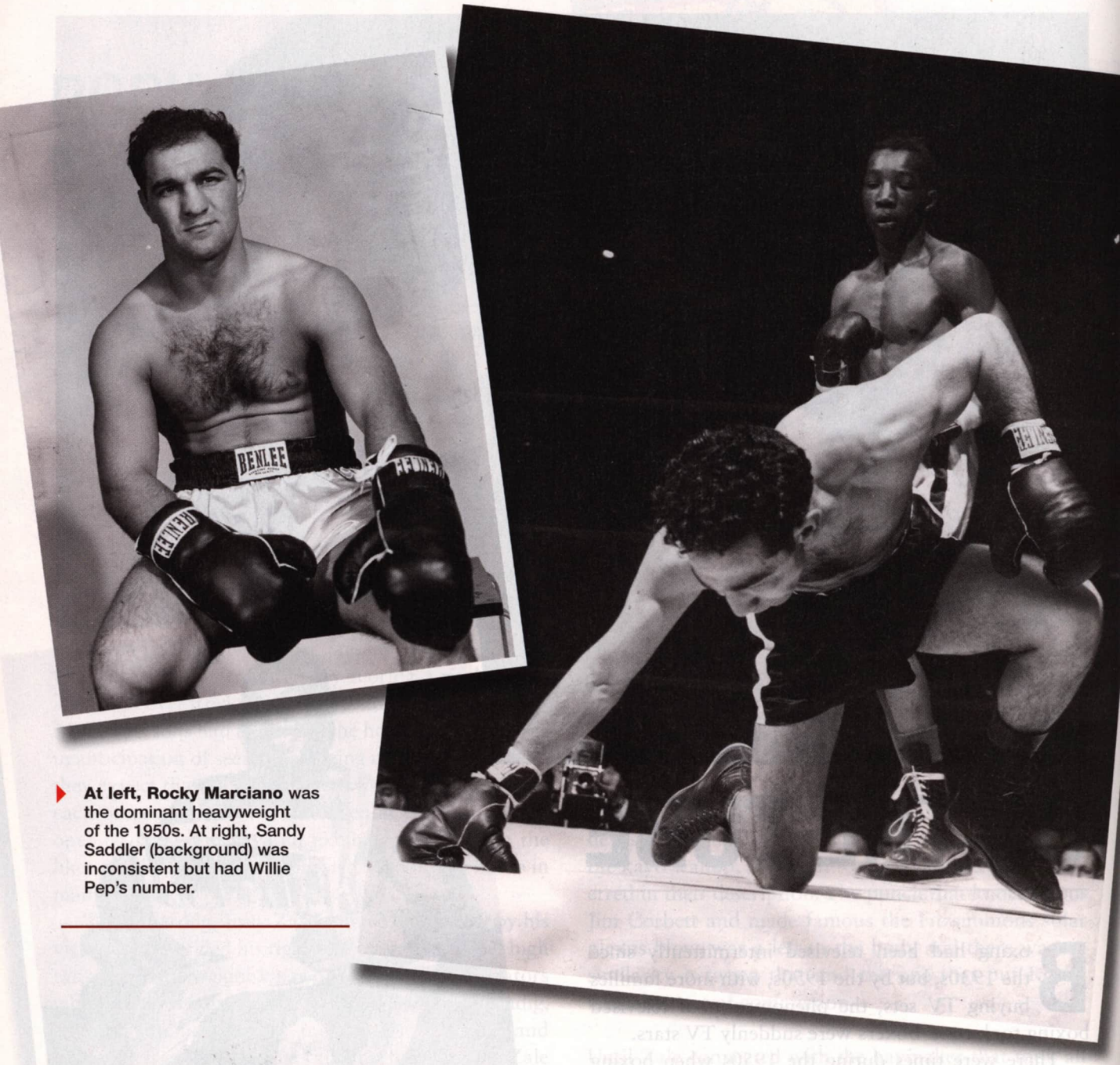
Boxing had been televised intermittently since the 1930s, but by the 1950s, with more families buying TV sets, the phenomenon of televised boxing took root. Boxers were suddenly TV stars.

There were times during the 1950s when boxing was on television almost every night of the week. All of the top fighters enjoyed an increase in popularity thanks to their appearances on such programs as *The Pabst Blue Ribbon Fights* and, the most popular of them all, *Gillette's Friday Night Fights*.

Television brought boxing to millions of people who had never seen the sport. Images of Ray Robinson and Archie Moore were used in advertisements to sell new sets. But it wasn't just the elite fighters who became household names; lesser known contenders such as Ralph "Tiger" Jones and Gaspar Ortega became as familiar in



Archie Moore was quite proud of himself when he survived four knockdowns to beat Yvon Durelle.



At left, Rocky Marciano was the dominant heavyweight of the 1950s. At right, Sandy Saddler (background) was inconsistent but had Willie Pep's number.

American living rooms as Lassie or Lucille Ball.

There was a downside, though. With fights available on television, live attendance went down at arenas all over the country. A staggering number of small fight clubs were forced to close. Without the fight clubs, young fighters had fewer opportunities to develop. Instead, prospects were rushed into televised bouts and sometimes beaten so badly that their careers were effectively ended. Television was comparable to a drug – there was a quick boost, but damage was being done, eroding the sport at the edges.

By the decade's end there was a major drop-off in televised boxing. By that time promoters of major fights were turning to closed-circuit television and showing bouts in theaters, outbidding networks for major bouts. By then the networks also had grown comfortable creating their own programming; boxing had served its purpose and was no longer necessary.

The Gillette show would last into 1964, when declining ratings caused its cancellation by ABC. Boxing fans of a certain age still talk, ad nauseum, about watching the Gillette fights with their fathers or grandfathers. It

was, undoubtedly, an American institution.

THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

March 25, 1958: Sugar Ray Robinson becomes middleweight champion for a record-setting fifth time by defeating Carmen Basilio by a 15-round split decision.

Dec. 10, 1958: Archie Moore recovers from three knockdowns in the first round and another in round five to stop Yvon Durelle in 11 rounds in one of boxing's greatest fights.

Other happenings: The Willie Pep-Sandy Saddler series comes to a conclusion, Saddler leading three bouts to one ... Rocky Marciano retires in 1956, making him the only heavyweight champion in history to retire undefeated ... The International Boxing Club, the sport's most powerful organization, is dissolved by the U.S. District court on grounds of monopolizing the sport, having promoted 47 of 51 title bouts over four years. IBC co-founder James D. Norris is revealed to have Mafia ties.

TOP 10 (1950-59)

1. SUGAR RAY ROBINSON
Decade Record: 41-5
Titles: World welterweight (vacated 1950); world middleweight (1951, 51-52, 55-57, 57, 58-60)
Notable Opponents of the 50s: (Bobo Olson, Jake LaMotta, Randy Turpin, Rocky Graziano, Joey Maxim, Gene Fullmer, Carmen Basilio)
Background: He was nowhere near as consistent as he had been the decade before, but he still had enough to win the middleweight title five times. The St. Valentines Day Massacre of LaMotta became Robinson's signature win. He also came within a rational thermometer of beating the game Joey Maxim for the light heavyweight title. Both his fights with Basilio were named THE RING's Fight of the Year.

2. ARCHIE MOORE: Made the most of a light heavyweight title shot in besting Joey Maxim at 38 years old ... defended the crown while also chasing heavyweight honors ... survived horrific first round to defend against Yvonne Durrelle.

3. KID GAVILAN: Bested Johnny Bratton for the welterweight title ... made 7 defenses, including a win over Carmen Basilio ... fell short against Bobo Olson for the middleweight title ... cries of robbery followed his title loss to Johnny Saxton.

4. ROCKY MARCIANO: Knocked out Joe Louis en route to a crack at heavyweight champ Jersey Joe Walcott ... made good in round 13 ... defenses against a still game Ezzard Charles and a Moore who'd won 21 straight stood out on the road to 49-0.

5. PASCUAL PEREZ: Captured the flyweight crown less than two years into his career, decisioning Yoshio Shirai ... lone loss, via decision, came in a non-title affair versus Sadao Yaoita in 1959 ... avenged it by year's end with a knockout.

6. SANDY SADDLER: Inconsistent to a fault, still regained the featherweight crown from Pep ... held with his jr. lightweight crown until retirement in 1957 ... cut stoppage of Flash Elorde in their second fight.

7. GENE FULLMER: Beat Robinson for the middleweight crown, only to fall victim to the greatest left hook in history in the rematch ... rebounded, capturing the NBA honors in THE RING's 1959 Fight of the Year against Basilio.

8. CARMEN BASILIO: Premiere action hero of his time participated in THE RING's Fight of the Year consecutively from 1955-59 ... won the welterweight title twice and defeated Robinson for the middleweight crown.

9. JOE BROWN: "Old Bones'" first of three wins over Bud Smith in 1956 gave him the lightweight title ... beat tough contenders Ralph Dupas, Kenny Lane, and Dave Charnley.

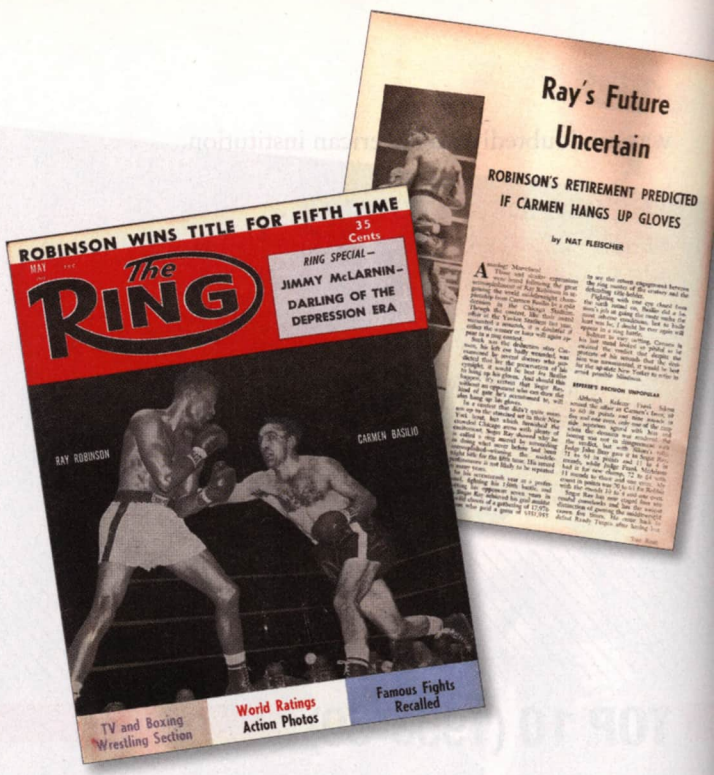
10. HAROLD JOHNSON: Archie Moore likely cost him a decade as light heavyweight champ ... won only one of their four fights in the 50s ... beat Ezzard Charles and sturdy contenders like Bert Whitehurst and heavyweight Nino Valdes.

Cliff Rold

RAY'S FUTURE UNCERTAIN

ROBINSON'S RETIREMENT PREDICTED IF CARMEN HANGS UP GLOVES

By: **Nat Fleischer** / THE RING: **May 1958**



Amazing! Marvelous!

Those and similar expressions were heard following the great accomplishment of Ray Robinson in regaining the world middleweight championship from Carmen Basilio by a split decision in the Chicago Stadium. Though the contest, like their initial affair at the Yankee Stadium last year, warranted a rematch, it is doubtful if either the winner or loser will again appear in a ring contest.

Such was the deduction after Carmen, his left eye badly wounded, was examined by several doctors who predicted that for the preservation of his eyesight, it would be best for Basilio to hang up his gloves. And should this happen, it's certain that Sugar Ray, without an opponent who can draw the kind of gate he's accustomed to, will also hang up his gloves.

In a contest that didn't quite measure up to the standard set in their New York bout, which furnished the crowded Chicago arena with plenty of excitement, Sugar Ray showed why he is called a ring marvel by succeeding in doing what never before had been accomplished—winning a title for the fifth time. His record performance is not likely to be repeated in many years.

In his seventeenth year as a professional, fighting his 150th battle, and spotting his opponent seven years in age, Sugar Ray achieved his goal amidst the wild cheers of a gathering of 17,976 persons who paid a gross of $351,955 to see the return engagement between the ring master of the century and the defending title-holder.

Fighting with one eye closed from the sixth round on, Basilio did a he-man's job in going the route under the most adverse conditions, but so badly hurt was he, I doubt he ever again will appear in a ring battle.

Subject to easy cutting, Carmen in his last stand looked so pitiful as he awaited the verdict that despite the protests of his seconds that the decision was unwarranted, it would be best for the up-state New Yorker to retire to avoid possible blindness.

REFEREE'S DECISION UNPOPULAR

Although Referee Frank Sikora scored the affair in Carmen's favor, 69 to 60 in points and nine rounds to five and one even, only one of the ringside reporters agreed with him and when the decision was rendered, the booing was not in disagreement with the verdict, but with Sikora's tally. Judge John Bray gave it to Sugar Ray, 71 to 64 in points and 11 to 4 in rounds, while Judge Frank McAdams had it for new champ, 72 to 64 with 11 rounds to three and one even. My count in points was 70 to 63 for Robbie with rounds 10 to 4 and one even.

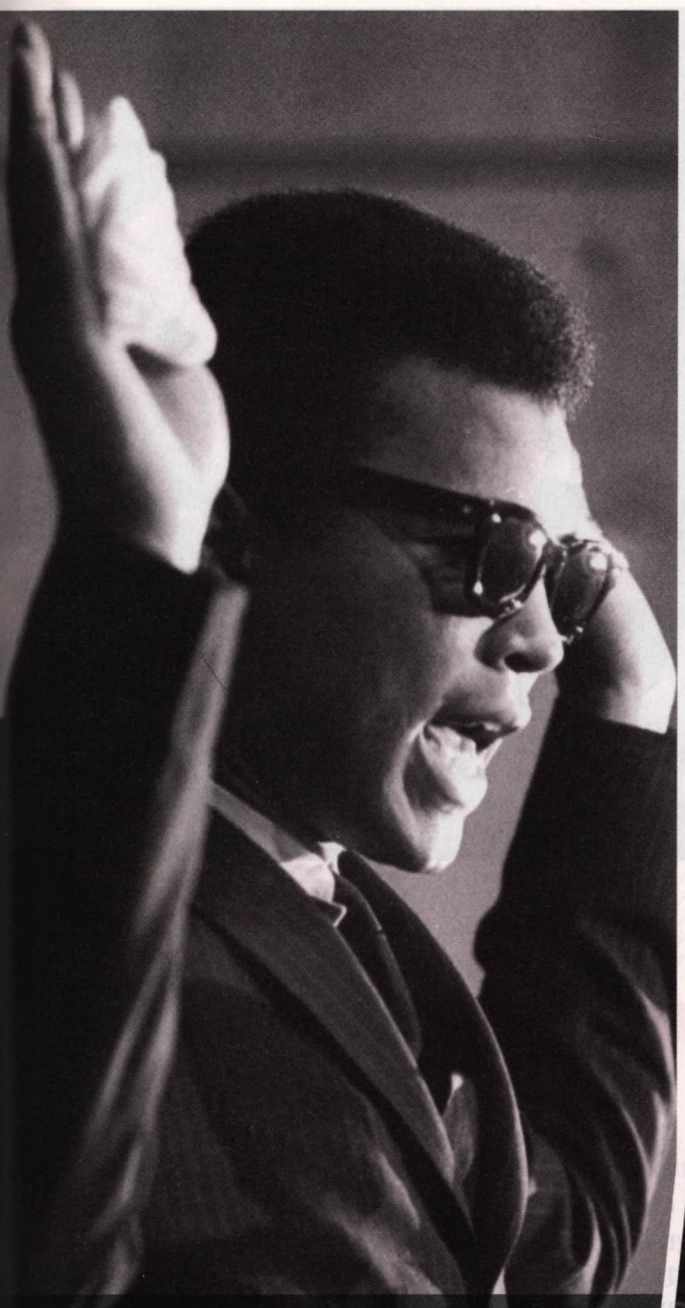
Sugar Ray has now staged four successful comebacks and has the unique distinction of gaining the middleweight crown five times. He came back to defeat Randy Turpin after having lost the title to him in England; stopped Cene Fullmer after losing to him; beat Carl Bobo Olson when Ray came out of retirement, and wound up with his triumphant return to the top by his latest victory. He is eager to rest on his laurels, and will engage in another bout only if Basilio is his opponent, since that bout alone can bring in the money Ray would expect.

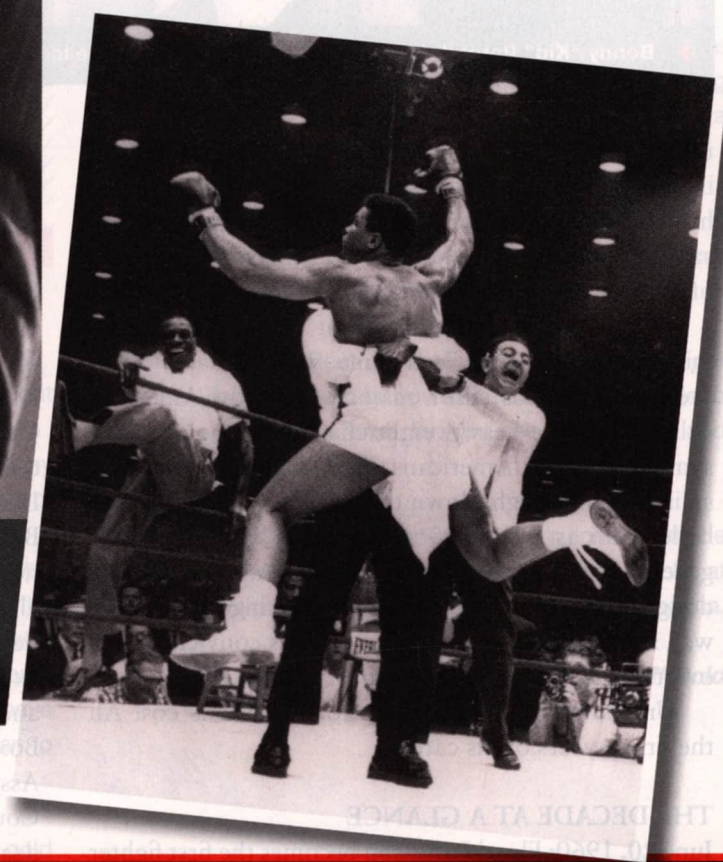
To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/nm2S8 on RingTV.com.

ALI ON TRIAL

Muhammad Ali failed the U.S. Armed Forces qualifying test in 1964, only to be reclassified as 1A in 1966. This meant the heavyweight champion was now eligible for the military draft and induction into the U.S. Army during a time when the Vietnam War was at its most heated. Ali, by now entrenched in the Black Muslim movement, announced that he would not serve because the teachings of Islam prohibited him from participating in a "Christian war."

Appearing in Houston for his scheduled induction on April 28, 1967, Ali refused to step forward when his name was called. When he was warned that his refusal was a felony punishable by five years in prison and a fine of $10,000, he held firm. As a result, Ali was placed





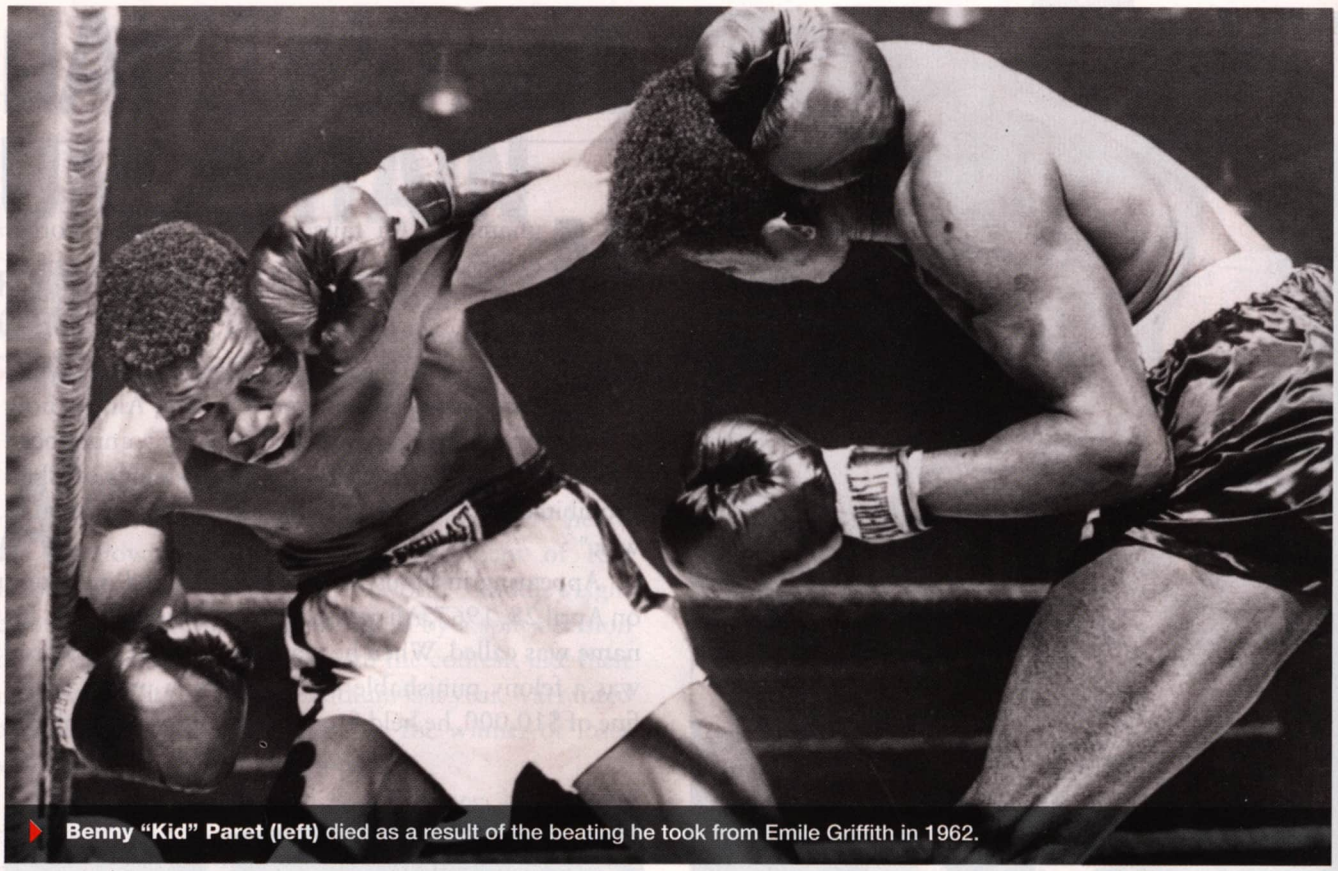
Muhammad Ali (left) missed more than three years of his career when he refused induction into the armed services.

Ali (right), at the time still known as Cassius Clay, "shocked the world" when he took the heavyweight title from Sonny Liston.

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

1960s – Fleischer continues to recognize Muhammad Ali as champion after Ali refuses to be inducted into the U.S. Armed Forces.

1972 – Fleischer dies of heart disease on June 25. He is replaced as editor by his son-in-law, Nat Loubet.



Benny "Kid" Paret (left) died as a result of the beating he took from Emile Griffith in 1962.

under arrest. The New York State Athletic Commission immediately suspended his boxing license and stripped him of his title. Other boxing commissions did the same. At a trial held in June, 1967, Ali was found guilty of evading the draft.

The heavyweight champion of the world refusing military duty during war time was a major news event. Boxing was still a major part of the American culture, and the heavyweight champion was a sort of symbol to many Americans. Ali's refusal of the draft split the public right down the middle. Younger people hailed him as a counter-culture hero, while the older generation scorned him as an un-American draft dodger. But as the public began turning against the war, support for Ali increased, until his conviction was overturned by the Supreme Court in June, 1971.

Unfortunately, standing up for his beliefs cost Ali the prime years of his career.

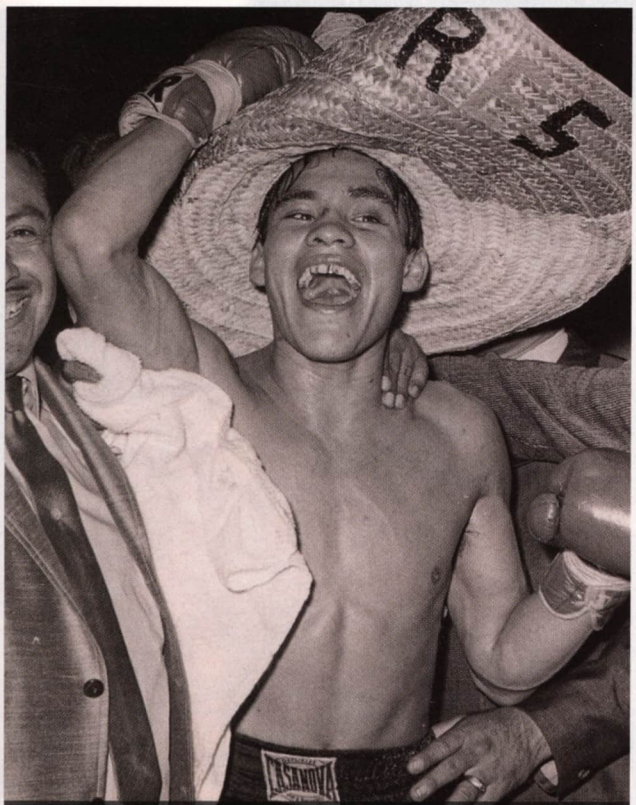
THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

June 20, 1960: Floyd Patterson becomes the first fighter to win the heavyweight title twice, knocking out his former conqueror, Ingemar Johansson, in five rounds at Yankee Stadium.

March 24, 1962: Benny "Kid" Paret suffers injuries in a televised welterweight title bout with Emile Griffith. He falls into a coma and dies days later.

February 25, 1964: Ali, still known as Cassius Clay, "shocks the world" by stopping Sonny Liston to win the world's heavyweight title.

Other happenings: Corruption in boxing came to the fore during a 1960 FBI investigation when Jake LaMotta admitted that he had thrown a fight with Billy Fox in exchange for a shot at the middleweight title ... in 1961 Frankie Carbo and "Blinky" Palermo, alleged fight "fixers" and boxing managers with ties to the Mafia, are charged with conspiracy and extortion against welterweight champion Don Jordan and sentenced to 25 years in prison ... the National Boxing Association changes its name to World Boxing Association; a splinter group forms the World Boxing Council ... almost one year to the day of Kid Paret's death, featherweight Davey Moore dies after a bout with Sugar Ramos.



Ruben Olivares went undefeated in the 1960s.

TOP 10 (1960-69)

1. EDER JOFRE
Decade Record: 19-2-1
Titles: NBA bantamweight (1960-65); world bantamweight (1961-65)
Notable Opponents of the 60s: (Eloy Sanchez, Johnny Caldwell, Jose Medel, Katsutoshi Aoki, Bernado Caraballo, Fighting Harada)
Background: While Ali was far more famous, Jofre was one of the most complete fighters in the annals of the ring. He dominated a quality field of contenders; Caldwell, Caraballo, and Aoki had one loss between them in over 100 fights coming in. On neutral turf, Jofre may well have held off the challenge of the great Harada, the only man to defeat him in any decade.

2. MUHAMMAD ALI: 1960 Olympic light heavyweight gold medalist posted dominant wins over the heavily favored Sonny Liston and former champion Floyd Patterson ... politics stopped his reign and stole pieces of his prime.

3. CARLOS ORTIZ: Began the decade as jr. welterweight champ, holding off and then losing to Duilio Loi ... lifted lightweight title from Joe Brown ... would trade the title with Ismael Laguna and stop the great Flash Elorde during both reigns.

4. EMILE GRIFFITH: Three reigns at welterweight, a nominal reign at jr. middleweight, and two as middleweight champion ... his tragic rivalry with Benny Paret overshadowed victories against Luis Rodriguez, Nino Benvenuti, and Dick Tiger.

5. FIGHTING HARADA: Stopped Thailand's Pone Kingpetch at 112 for the title ... narrowly beat Jofre for bantamweight honors ... loss of the featherweight crown on the road against Johnny Famechon widely viewed as a robbery.

6. NINO BENVENUTI: Won first 65 fights, the jr. middleweight title, and two middleweight titles in his trilogy with Emile Griffith ... also a knockout of Luis Rodriguez ... took a non-title loss to Dick Tiger.

7. VICENTE SALDIVAR: Stopped Sugar Ramos for the featherweight title ... made seven defenses ... surprising early retirement in 1967 ended quickly ... beat Jose Legra in 1969.

8. RUBEN OLIVARES: "Rockabye" Ruben went 54-0-1 in the 60s ... knocked out the historically underrated Lionel Rose in five rounds to win the bantamweight crown.

9. DICK TIGER: Beat Gene Fullmer for middleweight crown ... Joey Giardello borrowed it ... Lost second title to Griffith ... upset Jose Torres for light heavyweight title and lost it by KO to Bob Foster.

10. FLASH ELORDE: Began 1960 with a jr. lightweight title win ... kept the crown until 1967 ... fell short in cracks at Ortiz's lightweight crown ... non-title win over Ismael Laguna.

Cliff Rold

"I'M UNBEATABLE"...

BY CASSIUS CLAY (HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER) AS TOLD TO NAT LOUBET

ANOTHER RING EXCLUSIVE FEATURE

THE RING: **February 1963**

I like to fool around. I like to josh and needle, play practical jokes. But underneath all of that lies a really serious vein.

When I tell you that I am going to be the heavyweight champion of the world I am not joking.

I have confidence, and behind it, the ambition, punch and skill with which to make my prediction come true.

Meanwhile a lot of fight people who have been hiding in the woodwork have come out to grab whatever publicity they can get out of whatever association with me they can set up in the newspapers.

There is Eddie Machen, for one. He invites me to take him on and name the round.

Then there is Cleveland Williams, another Liston victim, whose manager says he will pay me $1,000 for every round I could stay with this man. He couldn't come out for the second.

Let a fighter achieve a certain amount of position and those who have been around for years making futile motions dash out to steal pieces of the limelight.

Billy Daniels also has had something to say, and I have told my manager, Bill Faversham, to let me take care of Williams and Daniels in one night. This also is not comedy.

Bill tells me that between now and September I will have three more fights. He says he is confident that with this extra preparation I could take Liston. I have the greatest respect for Faversham's opinions and in his ability to make them stand up.

Clay Calls Himself Only Liston Opponent

There is a lot of conversation about me and Liston. No wonder. Who else stands out for a serious shot at Sonny?

After Liston's case of homicide against Patterson, I felt I could demolish Floyd even faster that Sonny did the job, and he was timed in 2 minutes 6 seconds.

Patterson looked terrible. He gave the impression that he had died in training camp and had had no sleep for many nights. Floyd appeared to be suffering from paralysis. He played right into Liston's hands.

Where was Patterson's speed? Where were his plans of attack and defense? Where was his experience? He made Sonny look like the greatest fighter in the history of the ring. Now the reporters write about Liston as the Monster, the Great Unbeatable. That's plain junk.

I know how to beat the slow moving flatfooted Liston. I am convinced that a fighter with speed, with a punch and guts, and the knowledge how to use both of these assets, can beat Liston.

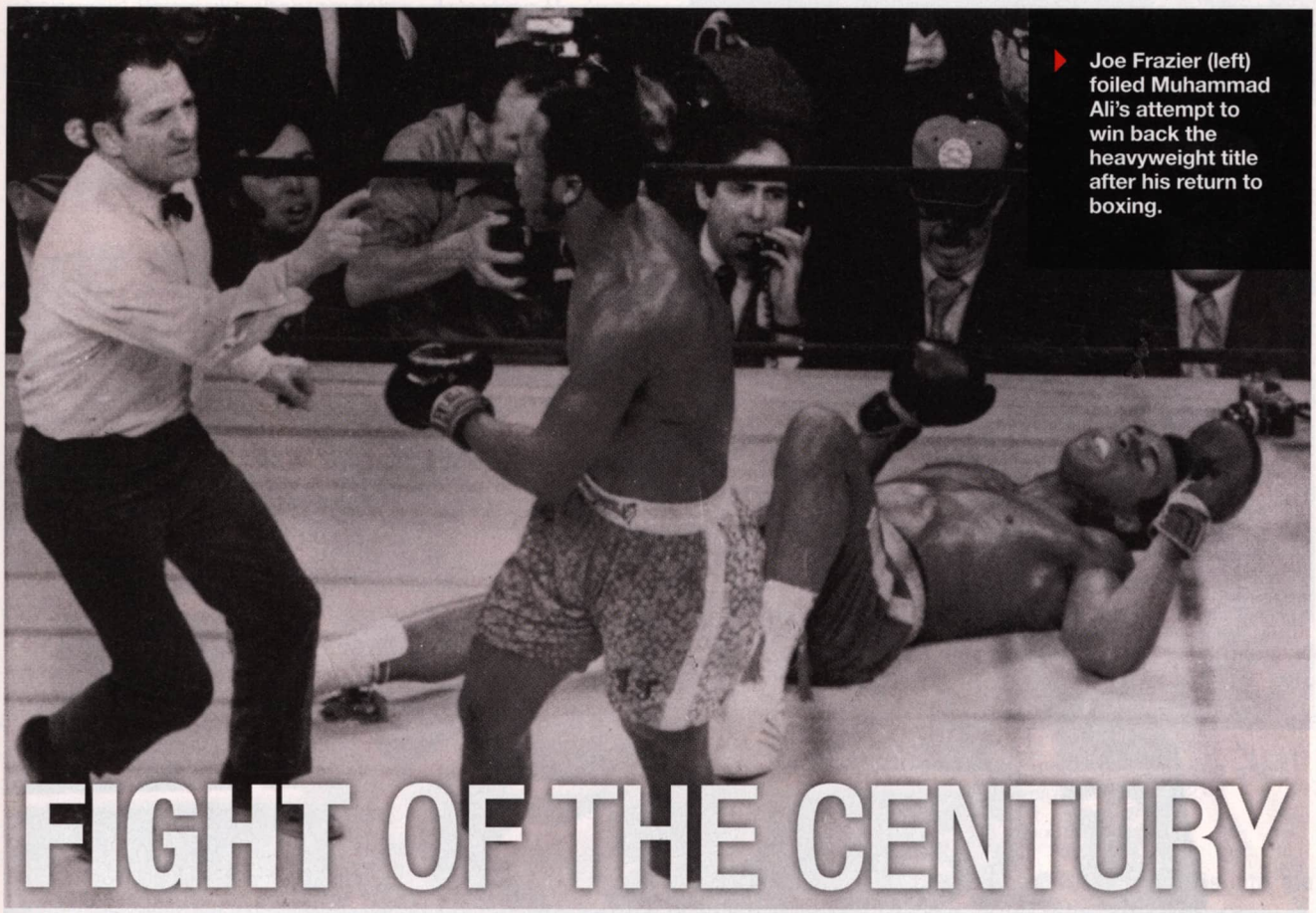
I would make Liston think he was fighting ten guys. I would have him so dizzy he would think he was on a carousel.

Anyone who says I could not handle Liston is not with it. I would jab and hook him silly and move around him.

Angelo Dundee, my trainer, keeps telling me to curb my tongue. He is a quiet man by nature and anybody who talks up, with confidence, impresses him as a kook.

Well, I say only what I believe. You will note that so far I have made good on my predictions. Like stopping Archie Moore in four heats. I called the round. I will call it in a Liston fight.

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/CGDqb on RingTV.com.



Joe Frazier (left) foiled Muhammad Ali's attempt to win back the heavyweight title after his return to boxing.

FIGHT OF THE CENTURY

Muhammad Ali's return to boxing was bigger than anyone could have anticipated. Not only had he become a larger than life figure who would eventually become the most recognized man on the planet, he also wanted his title back. While Ali had been battling the U.S. Government, Joe Frazier was grinding up the heavyweight division, beating Jimmy Ellis in 1970 to earn full recognition as Ali's successor.

The first Ali-Frazier bout, dubbed The Fight of the Century, was in the making for more than a year. When it finally achieved lift-off on March 8, 1971, a celebrity-studded audience jammed into Madison Square Garden to witness the return of big-time boxing. They saw Frazier put on the performance of a lifetime, hammering out a 15-round unanimous decision to retain the title and ruin Ali's dream of a triumphant comeback.

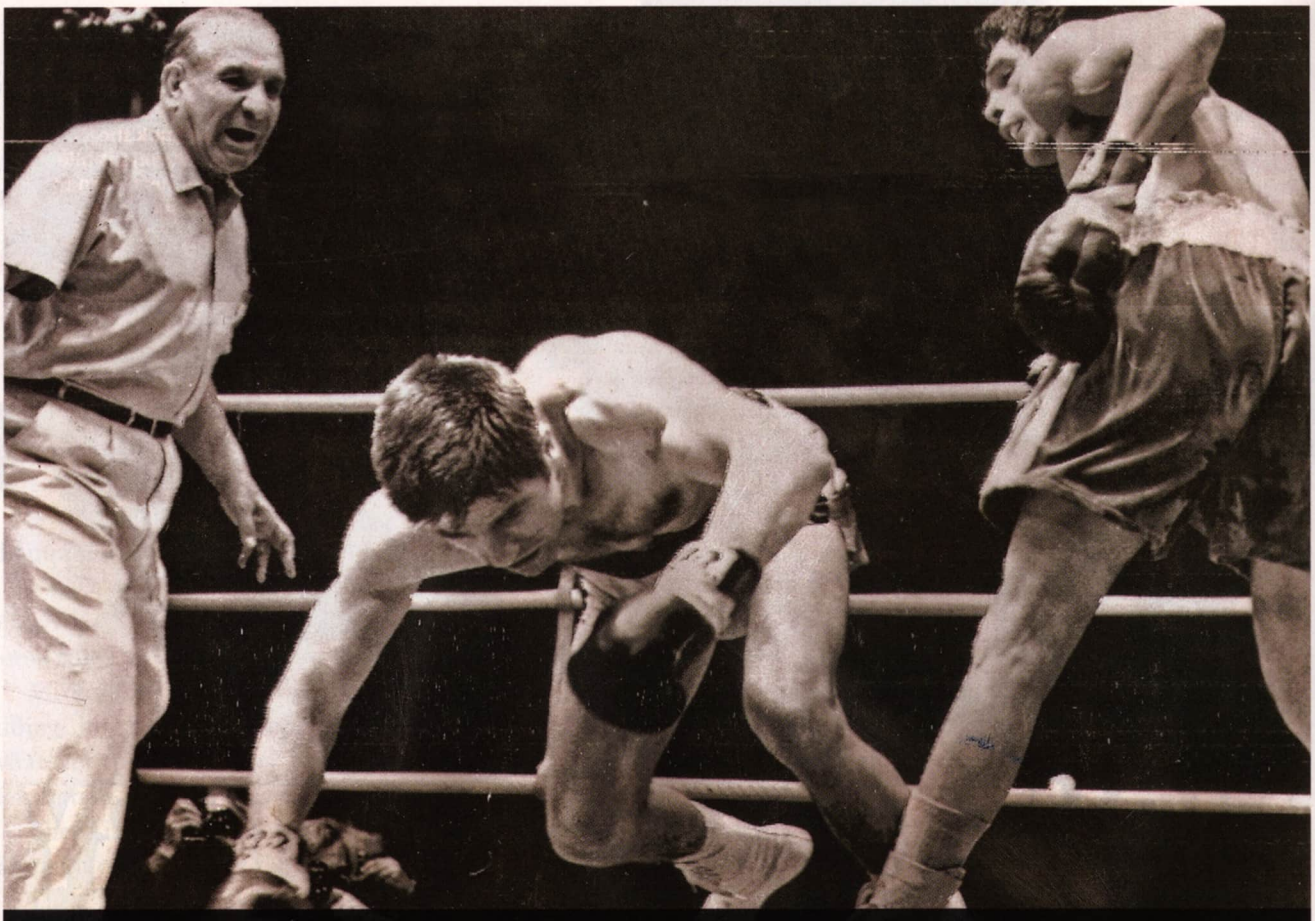
The bout was a pop-culture phenomenon that transcended sports. THE RING honored it as Fight of the Year, but it was so much more than that. There'd been much gravitas around boxing during the 1960s, with most of the headlines given over to ring deaths, corruption, declining TV ratings, and Ali's draftboard problems. The first Ali-Frazier bout brought boxing out of a dark period and into a new era of commercial possibilities. Cynics who had written boxing off were stunned that Ali and Frazier had attracted so much media attention.

Ali had also shown incredible fortitude in the bout, surviving several of Frazier's screaming left hooks, and

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

1976 – THE RING enters into a 10-year agreement with a Venezuelan company to publish a Spanish-language version of the magazine.

1977 – The magazine's integrity is compromised when the Tournament of Champions, in which it played a role, was canceled amid corruption charges.



Carlos Monzon (right, against Nino Benvenuti) was one of the greatest middleweights ever.

rising from a last-round knockdown to finish on his feet. He took the loss well, showing a side of himself that even his critics would admire.

Taking the loss harder than Ali was the group that had become known as "Ali's Army." These were the young liberals, the college students, the black youth, and the war protesters who'd appointed Ali as their prince, their symbol of "Black Power," their symbol of the future. Seeing him on his back after Frazier had leveled him made it clear that the future was still a long way off.

THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

June 26, 1971: Roberto Duran wins the lightweight title, stopping champion Ken Buchanan in the 13th round.

October 30, 1974: Ali regains the heavyweight title, beating George Foreman in Africa.

October 1, 1975: Ali battles Frazier for the third time, winning via 14th round TKO. Frazier's relentless pressure, and Ali's incredible late round rally mark The Thrilla in Manila as one of the greatest bouts of all time.

Other happenings: The 1976 Olympic team captures five gold medals and massive media exposure ... Carlos Monzon makes a record-setting 14th defense

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

1979 – THE RING is purchased by a group of investors, headed by basketball star Dave DeBusschere. Noted author Bert Randolph Sugar becomes editor and publisher.

1984 – Randy Gordon replaces Sugar during a time of financial difficulty but remains on the job for less than a year.

of the middleweight championship, defeating Rodrigo Valdez ... Leon Spinks scores an upset over Ali to win the heavyweight title; Ali beats Spinks in the rematch, becoming champion for the third time ... THE RING founder Nat Fleischer dies ... Wilfred Benitez becomes the youngest champion ever, at age 17.

TOP 10 (1970-79)

1. ROBERTO DURAN
Decade Record: 54-1
Titles: WBA lightweight (1972-79); WBC lightweight (1978-79)
Notable Opponents of the 70s: (Ernesto Marcel, Hiroshi Kobayashi, Ken Buchanan, Esteban DeJesus, Ray Lampkin, Saoul Mamby, Carlos Palomino)
Background: "Manos de Piedra" lost only once, in a ten-round non-title fight against DeJesus, and avenged the loss twice with brutal stoppages. Knockouts of the talented Marcel and Kobayashi served as a warning even before he toppled Buchanan for the world title. Duran would end the decade running over former welterweight champ Carlos Palomino to set up a sugary 1980s showdown.

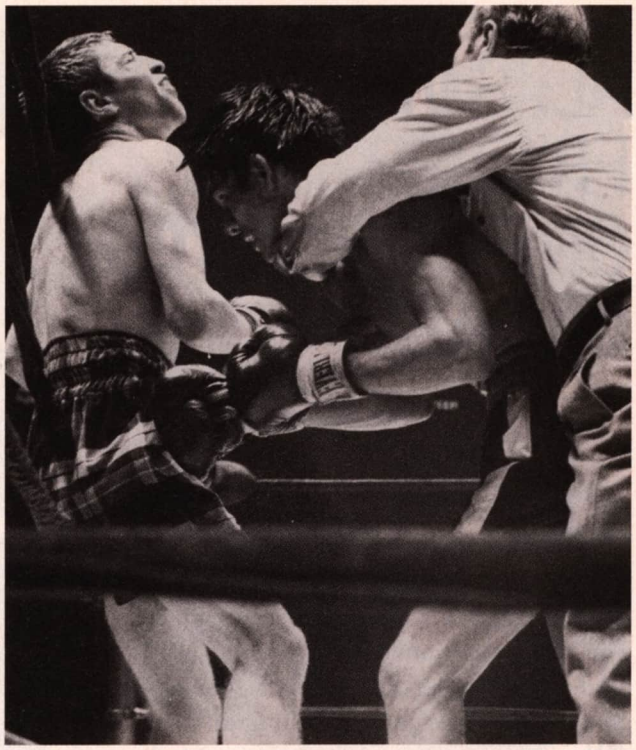
2. CARLOS MONZON: Knocked out Nino Benvenuti to win the middleweight title ... made a then-record 14 consecutive title defenses ... wins over Bennie Briscoe, Emile Griffith, Jose Napoles, and Rodrigo Valdes gave the numbers meaning.

3. JOSE NAPOLES: "Mantequilla" entered the decade already king at welterweight ... lost on a cut to Billy Backus and quickly avenged defeat ... made 10 defenses before losing to John Stracey in 1975 and retiring.

4. ALEXIS ARGUELLO: Stopped champion Ruben Olivares in a featherweight classic ... outdueled Alfredo Escalera to win the WBA belt at 130 pounds ... six defenses came against the likes of Escalera, Bazooka Limon, and Bobby Chacon.

5. MIGUEL CANTO: Lost first title shot against Betulio Gonzalez ... rebounded to beat Shoji Oguma for the crown ... two revenge wins over Gonzalez and two more wins over Oguma followed in a then-record 14 consecutive title defenses.

6. WILFREDO GOMEZ: 15-0-1 when he defeated WBC 122-pound titlist Dong-Kyun Yim, Bazooka was halfway through what would be 32 consecutive KO wins into the 80s ... fifth-round knockout of a 52-0 Carlos Zarate made him a god in Puerto Rico.



Roberto Duran burst onto the world boxing scene when he took Ken Buchanan's lightweight title in 1972.

7. CARLOS ZARATE: Nine defenses of the WBC bantamweight belt were overshadowed by a non-title showdown with undefeated WBA titleholder Alfonso Zamora ... Zarate won the "Battle of the Z Boys" in four ... Lupe Pintor was lucky to take his belt in 1979.

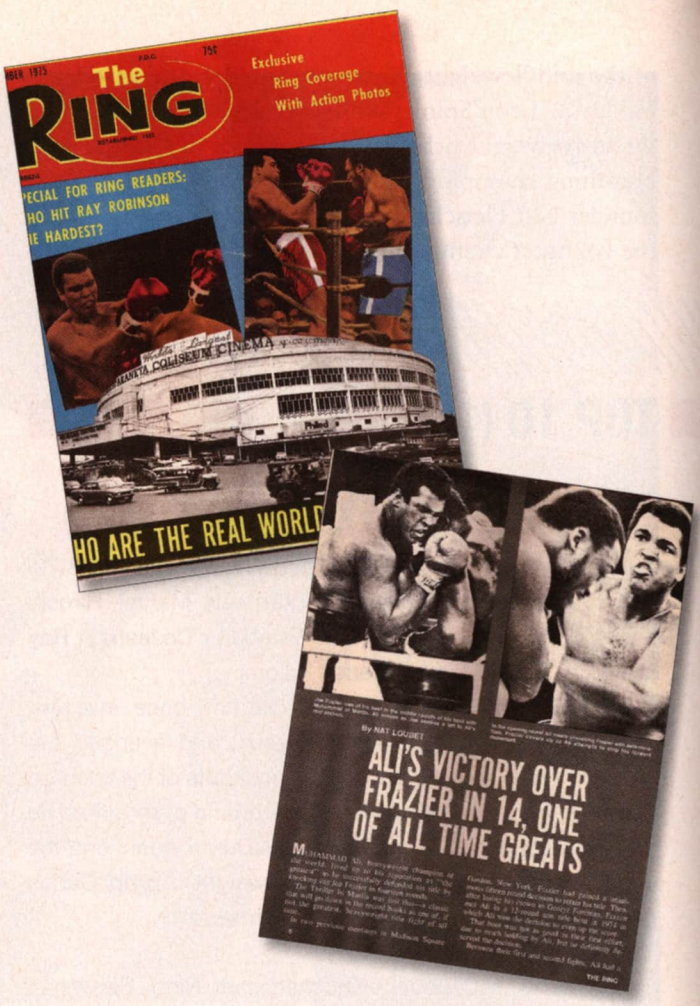
8. MUHAMMAD ALI: Some inconsistency outweighed by Manila, and beating Foreman to regain the crown ... a woeful loss to Leon Spinks was avenged for a third heavyweight title.

9. BOB FOSTER: Foster extended his rule into 1974 ... ended at a then-record 14 consecutive title defenses ... suffered KO's to Ali and Frazier at heavyweight.

10. YOKO GUSHIKEN: Won WBA light flyweight belt in his ninth fight ... made ten defenses before the decade was out.

Cliff Rold

ALI'S VICTORY OVER FRAZIER IN 14, ONE OF ALL TIME GREATS



By: **Nat Loubet** / THE RING: **December 1975**

MUHAMMAD Ali, heavyweight champion of the world, lived up to his reputation as "the greatest" as he successfully defended his title by knocking out Joe Frazier in fourteen rounds.

The Thriller in Manila was just that—a classic that will go down in the record books as one of, if the not the greatest, heavyweight title fight of all time.

In two previous meetings in Madison Square Garden, New York, Frazier had gained a unanimous fifteen round decision to retain his title. Then, after losing his crown to George Foreman, Frazier met Ali in a 12-round non title bout in 1974 in which Ali won the decision to even up the score.

The stage was set for Manila and Super Fight Number III. The fight was ballyhooed as the Fight of the Century and it turned out to be close to that.

Going into the eleventh session, Frazier had the lead and he looked the fresher of the two.

Joe was bobbing and weaving, taking Ali's best shots with seemingly no effect. Joe smashed his way into close quarters and appeared on the verge of becoming the third man to regain the heavyweight title. Floyd Patterson and Ali were the only two to achieve this.

Then Ali got his second wind, a tired fighter came to life, went up to his toes, reached down into his reserve of stamina. The tide began to turn in his favor in very close rounds by virtue of his super man's ability to mount an offense when he appeared on the way out. Going into round thirteen it was obvious that the next three rounds would decide the fight.

Midway through that round Ali landed the punch that changed the entire evening for both fighters. A right hand ripped into Frazier as he was coming in. It caught him in just the right place, stopped him on his heels and threw him back several steps. He was hurt.

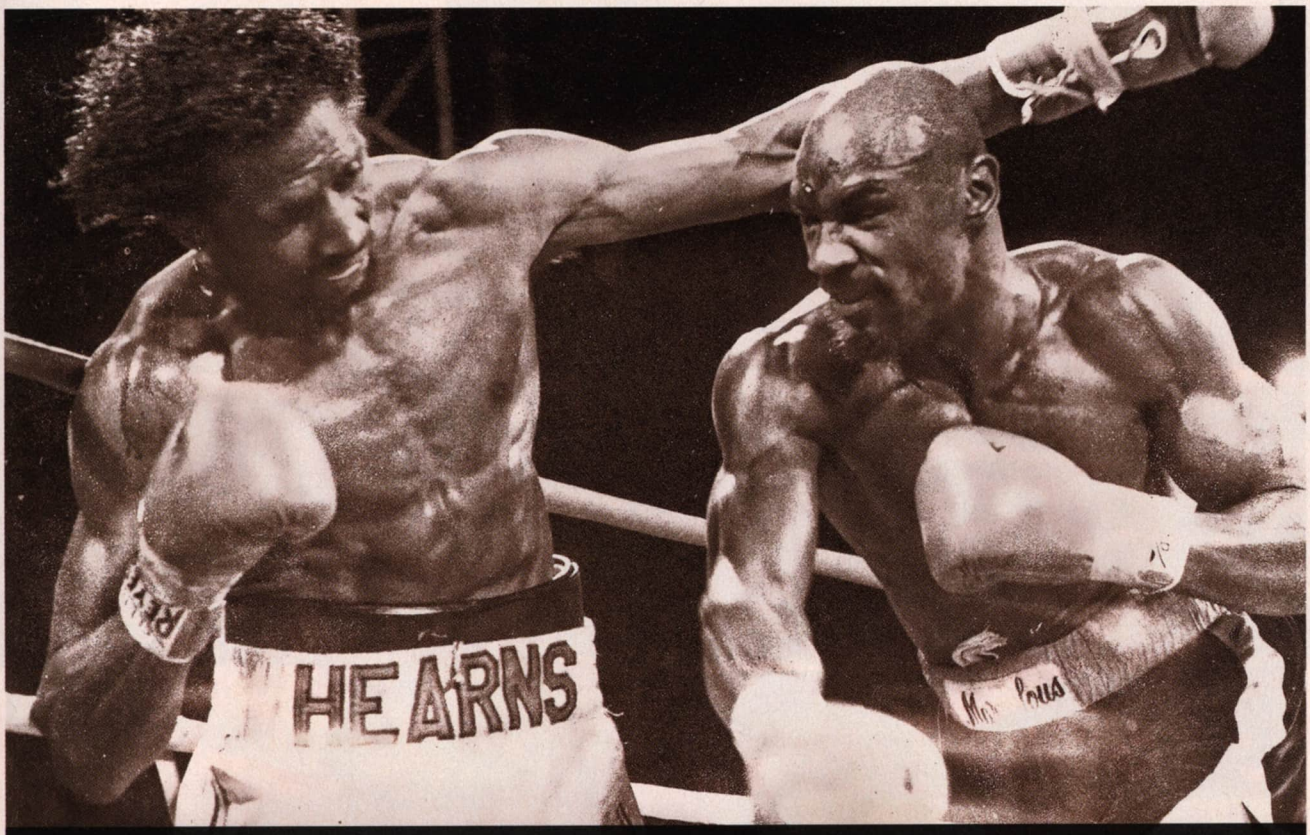
From that punch on Frazier was not the same fighter. Ali was gaining confidence. Frazier was no longer the bobbing, weaving charger. He reverted to the Frazier of old, the Frazier who came in flat-footed with little movement—a style made to order for Ali.

Whereas Frazier was now all downhill, Ali gained strength. His combinations played havoc with Frazier, and before long his challenger's right eye was almost closed, with a cut under that optic.

At the end of round fourteen, with Frazier sitting in his corner, Eddie Futch, his manager, signaled to the referee that Frazier had had enough.

The bout was one of the most hard fought, exciting and punishing battles to have graced any ring. Usually return fights do not live up to their forecasts and are something less than scintillating. But the meeting between Ali and Frazier will certainly go into the Ring Record Book as one of the best all-around heavyweight title fights of all time. No. 3 was TOPS!

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/3HgV6 on RingTV.com.



Marvin Hagler (right) emerged victorious from his three-round war with Thomas Hearns but the fans also were winners.

3 ROUNDS OF MAYHEM

The bout came at the perfect moment. It was planted dead center in what was boxing's best decade since the 1920s. This was a time when HBO, Showtime, ESPN and USA were establishing themselves as boxing outlets, while ABC, NBC, and CBS showed quality fights almost every weekend. Magazine racks were filled with boxing titles, and newspapers treated boxing to serious coverage. There were great fights involving the likes of Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Alexis Arguello, and Aaron Pryor. But by '85 there was a fear that the game's momentum was slowing. Heavyweight champion Larry Holmes was aging, and the sport's biggest name, Leonard, was in one of his many retirements. Something major was needed to keep the sport humming.

Enter Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Thomas "Hitman" Hearns. Hagler was a well-regarded champion but was largely ignored by the mainstream. Hearns was a devastating hitter, but he'd lost to Leonard a few years earlier and hadn't lived it down. Hagler-Hearns, set for April 15, 1985, was treated as a monster promotion, but there was an underlying sense that it was merely a stopgap until promoters could come up with something better, or until Leonard came out of

***RING MAGAZINE* TIMELINE**

1985 – Nigel Collins begins his first stint as editor.

1988 – The policy of awarding RING championship belts is reinstated.

1990 – THE RING is purchased by Stanley Weston, who had worked for Fleischer in his youth. He moves the magazine's offices from Manhattan to Long Island, N.Y., and Steve Farhood is named editor.

Mike Tyson became the youngest heavyweight champ at 20 when he stopped Trevor Berbick in 1986.

retirement again. Little did anyone know that Hagler and Hearns were about to create a fight for the ages.

Hagler tore out of his corner for the first round, as did Hearns. Usually a methodical counter-puncher, Hagler was fighting like a crazy man. At times he seemed to be leaping in the air at Hearns.

"He was a man possessed," wrote Hugh McIlvanney, "the very incarnation of furious hostility, an enemy who shrank the ring with the heat of his malevolent intent."

While Hagler's middleweight title was on the line, something more ephemeral was at stake – Hagler and Hearns were fighting for the position vacated by Leonard. They were fighting to be the "face of boxing."

Finally, one of Hearns' punches slashed Hagler's forehead open. After referee Richard Steele sought the doctor's opinion during the third round, a bloody Hagler chased Hearns down and flattened him for the knockout win. After more than 60 professional fights, Hagler had finally punched his ticket to stardom.

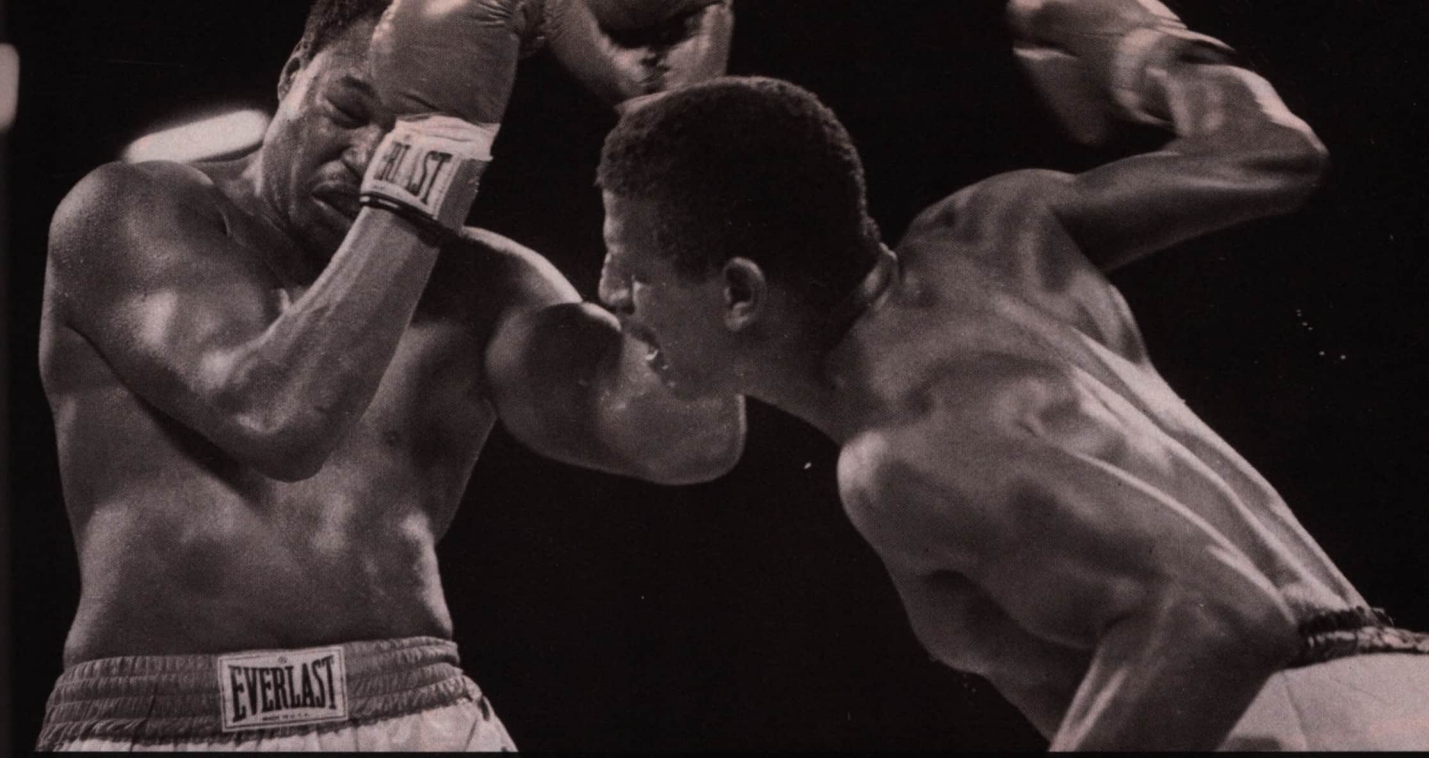
THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

November 25, 1980: Roberto Duran mysteriously quits in the middle of a bout with Ray Leonard, allegedly uttering the words, "No mas."

September 21, 1985: Michael Spinks becomes the first light heavyweight champion to successfully challenge for the heavyweight crown, upsetting IBF titlist Larry Holmes.

November 26, 1986: Mike Tyson defeats Trevor Berbick for the WBC belt, to become youngest heavyweight titleholder at age 20.

Other Happenings: Muhammad Ali retires and is soon diagnosed with Parkinson's Syndrome ... the 1984 Olympic team wins nine gold medals, the 1988 team wins three ... Duk Koo Kim dies after his bout with Ray Mancini, leading to the WBC shortening bouts from 15 to 12 rounds. Other groups follow suit, but the change doesn't prevent ring deaths ... gloves with attached thumbs are introduced... two more sanctioning bodies – the IBF and WBO – are established.



Michael Spinks became the first reigning light heavyweight to win the heavyweight title when he outpointed Larry Holmes.

TOP 10 (1980-89)

1. SUGAR RAY LEONARD
Decade Record: 10-1-1
Titles: WBC welterweight (1979-80; 1980-82); WBA welterweight (1981-82); WBA jr. middleweight (1981); WBC middleweight (1987); WBC super middleweight (1988-89); WBC light heavyweight (1988)
Notable Opponents of the 80s: (Roberto Duran, Ayub Kalule, Thomas Hearns, Marvin Hagler, Donny LaLonde)
Background: An eye injury was the catalyst for years of inactivity but, when he was in the ring, Leonard was the biggest star and biggest talent of the decade. Wins over Hearns, Duran, and Hagler give him a top trio as good as anyone in the history of the game. He earned kudos for toughness in a loss to Duran as well.

2. MARVIN HAGLER: Beat Minter for middleweight crown ... turned back Roberto Duran, Thomas Hearns ... made 12 title defenses.

3. SALVADOR SANCHEZ: Stopped "Little Red" Lopez for WBC featherweight title ... knocked out Wilfredo Gomez and Azumah Nelson in defending crown nine times ... untimely death at 23.

4. MICHAEL SPINKS: Unified light heavyweight ... moved up to become the first reigning 175 lb. king to claim the heavyweight title against Larry Holmes ... 91 seconds short of an almost perfect decade.

5. TOMMY HEARNS: Belts in five weight classes, from welterweight to light heavyweight ... knocked Duran stiff ... got the best of Leonard in their rematch 'draw.'

6. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ: Titles from jr. lightweight to jr. welterweight ... 68-0 run included wins over Edwin Rosario, Rocky Lockridge, and Roger Mayweather.

7. MIKE TYSON: Cleaned out a fractured heavyweight division with the efficiency of Joe Louis and the savagery of Dempsey ... scored knockouts of both Spinks and Holmes.

8. AARON PRYOR: KO'd Antonio Cervantes for WBA jr. welterweight title ... stopped Alexis Arguello twice, the first in the fight of the decade ... 8 defenses of the WBA crown and a short stint as IBF champ before issues outside the ring cut his prime short.

9. LARRY HOLMES: Finished his prime in the 80s with multiple title defenses and a superfight shelling of Gerry Cooney ... loss to Spinks in their rematch was a heist.

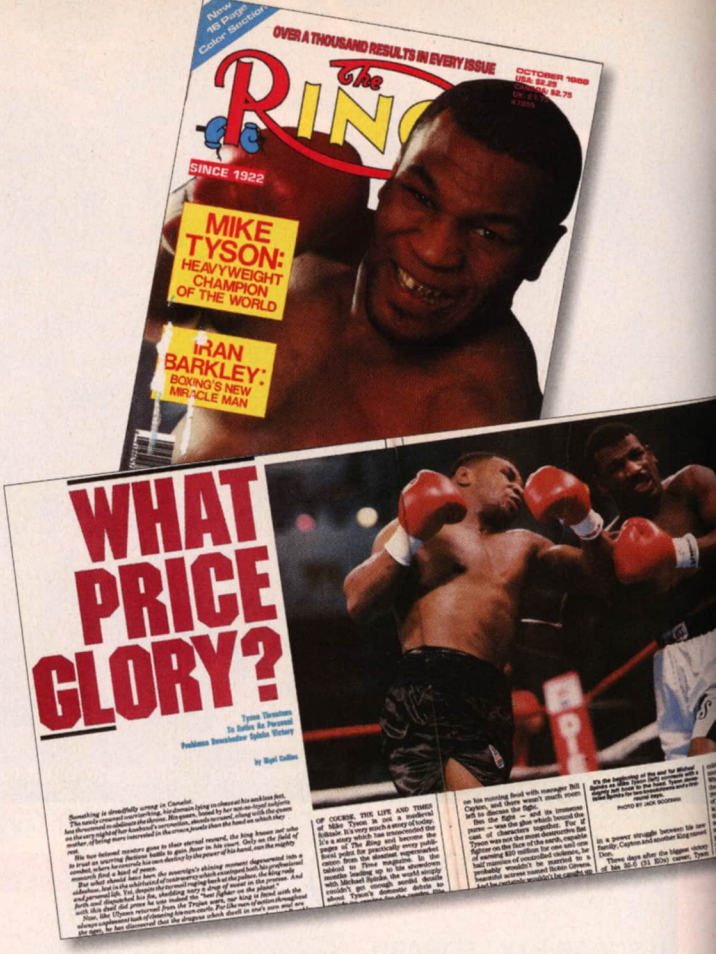
10. JEFF CHANDLER: Joltin' Jeff won the WBA bantamweight belt in 1980 ... made nine defenses before a bad loss and cataracts ended his career in 1984.

Cliff Rold

WHAT PRICE GLORY?

TYSON THREATENS TO RETIRE AS PERSONAL PROBLEMS OVERSHADOW SPINKS VICTORY

THE RING: **October 1988**



Something is dreadfully wrong in Camelot.

The newly crowned warrior/king, his domain lying in chaos at his sockless feet, has threatened to abdicate the throne. His queen, booed by her not-so-loyal subjects on the very night of her husband's coronation, stands accused, along with the queen mother, of being more interested in the crown jewels than the head on which they rest.

His two beloved mentors gone to their eternal reward, the king knows not who to trust as warring factions battle to gain favor in his court. Only on the field of combat, where he controls his own destiny by the power of his hand, can the mighty monarch find a kind of peace.

But what should have been the sovereign's shining moment degenerated into a sideshow, lost in the whirlwind of controversy which enveloped both his professional and personal life. Yet, despite the turmoil raging back at the palace, the king rode forth and dispatched his foe, shedding nary a drop of sweat in the process. And with this deed did prove he was indeed the "best fighter on the planet."

Now, like Ulysses returned from the Trojan wars, our king is faced with the always unpleasant task of cleaning his own castle. For like men of action throughout the ages, he has discovered that the dragons which dwell in one's own soul are always the most difficult to slay. –Ancient Parable

OF COURSE, THE LIFE AND TIMES of Mike Tyson is not a medieval folktale. It's very much a story of today. It's a story which has transcended the pages of THE RING and become the focal point for practically every publication from the sleaziest supermarket tabloid to Time magazine. In the months leading up to his showdown with Michael Spinks, the world simply couldn't get enough sordid details about Tyson's domestic debris to satisfy its craving for the tawdry. Pile on his running feud with manager Bill Cayton, and there wasn't much room left to discuss the fight.

But the fight—and its immense purse—was the glue which bound the cast of characters together. For if Tyson was not the most destructive fist-fighter on the face of the Earth, capable of earning $20 million for one and one half minutes of controlled violence, he probably wouldn't be married to a beautiful actress name Robin Givens. And he certainly wouldn't be caught up in a power struggle between his new family, Cayton and another King named Don.

Three days after the biggest victory of his 35-0 (31 KOs) career, Tyson celebrated his 22nd birthday by announcing his retirement from the ring. While nobody took Mike too seriously, the announcement is certainly indicative of the champion's troubled state of mind. Most observers agree, Tyson is just burned out and looking for some time off and perhaps a way to wiggle out of his contract with Cayton, who might go for a buyout if faced with the prospect of a protracted dispute. But one thing is for sure, fame and fortune has not made Tyson a happy man.

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/9AkxW on RingTV.com.

Buster Douglas turned in the greatest upset ever when he stopped seemingly invincible Mike Tyson in 1990.

EPIC UPSET

James "Buster" Douglas' derailment of Mike Tyson seemed to happen in slow motion. Even the audience in Tokyo was barely responsive, sitting quietly as Douglas outboxed, outslugged, and outgutted "The Baddest Man on the Planet."

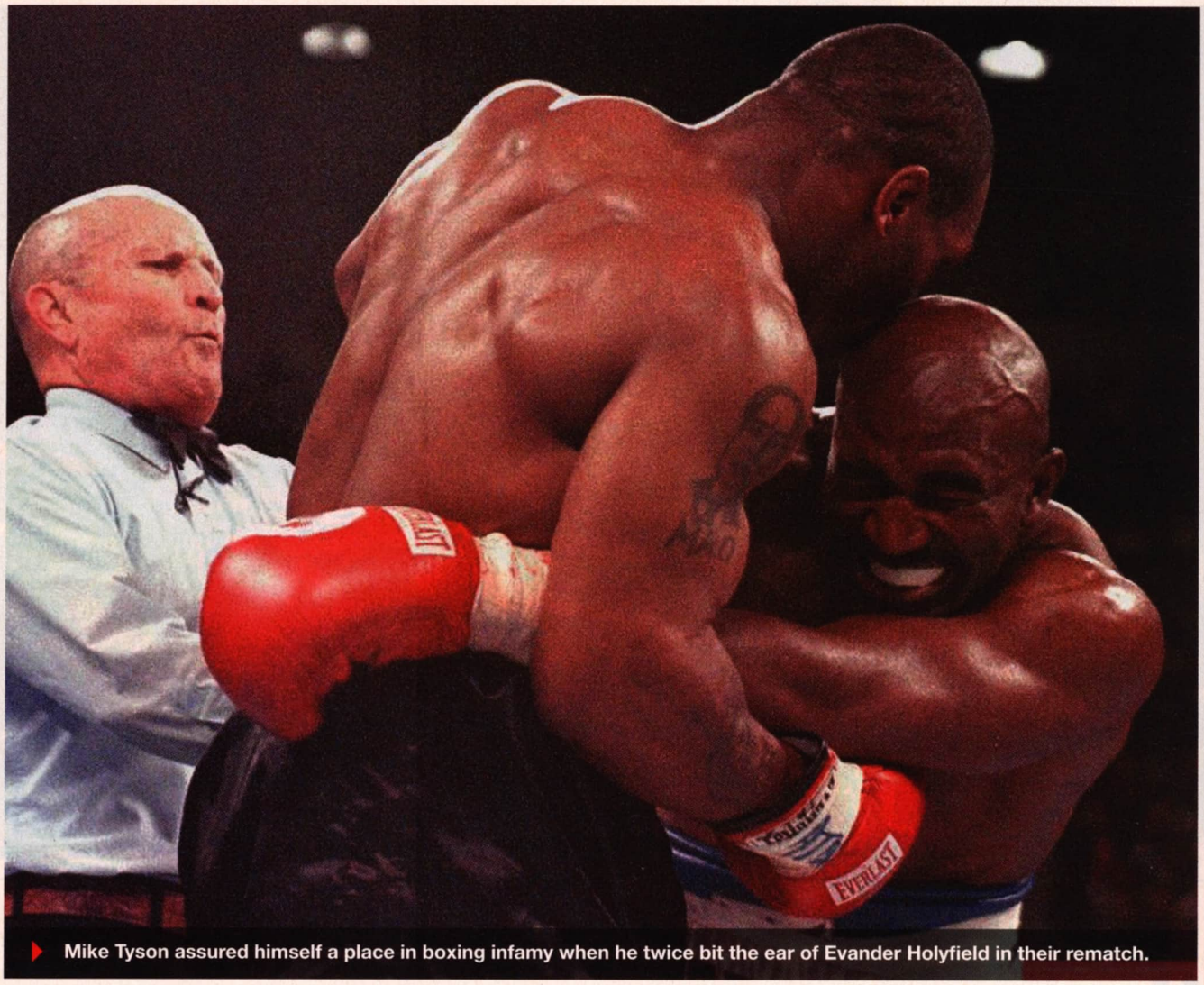
Tyson was approaching the fourth year of what had been an impressive championship run. He was supposed to be another Louis, another Dempsey, except, apparently, he'd grown bored. After all, when one peaks at 20, what does one do at 24 or 25, especially when one is already living in a mansion? Douglas, meanwhile, was a classic underachiever. He was fairly light on his feet for a big man, and had a brilliant left hand, but he seemed to lack a great fighter's temperament.

Still, Douglas was inspired on this night – his mother had recently passed away, and it was in her honor that he trained like a Spartan. He easily dominated Tyson, although Tyson connected with a right uppercut in the eighth that put Douglas on the canvas. Surely, we thought, Tyson's scary moment had passed. But Douglas rose, and proceeded to lay an encyclopedia's worth of punches on Tyson until the dramatic moment when Tyson fell in the 10th. The boy wonder rolled over, groping blindly along the canvas for his mouthpiece, barely making it to his feet just as referee Octavio Meyran waved the bout over. Tyson suddenly looked small and fragile as he slumped into Meyran's arms.

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

1993 – Kappa Publishing buys the magazine and moves the offices to Blue Bell, Pa., outside Philadelphia.

1997 – Collins becomes editor for the second time.



Mike Tyson assured himself a place in boxing infamy when he twice bit the ear of Evander Holyfield in their rematch.

Tyson's cronies tried to dampen the mood by saying Douglas had been given a long count in the eighth, but that just made Tyson appear more pathetic. Tyson never sought a rematch. He had money to spend, tigers to buy, and women to chase. His downfall was just beginning.

New champion Douglas got fat and lost the title just a few months later. In a way, he was the ultimate realization of something Gentleman Jim Corbett once observed. Corbett, who'd won the heavyweight crown nearly a century earlier, said that every fighter has a night where he boxes better than he ever has before, or ever will again. Douglas had such a night in Tokyo, pulling off the greatest upset in the history of boxing, if not the history of sports.

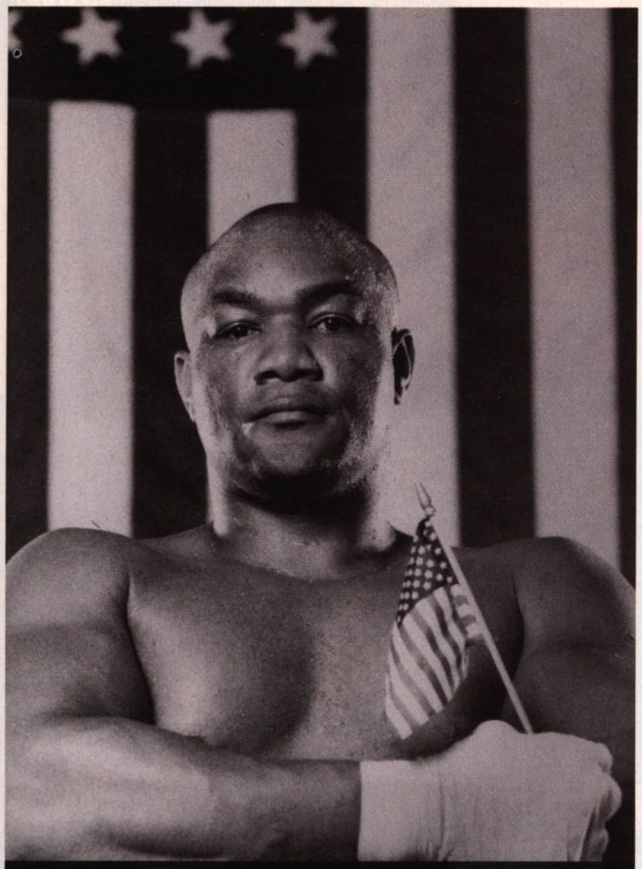
THE DECADE AT A GLANCE

February 20, 1993: With more than 132,000 fans in attendance, Julio Cesar Chavez beats Greg Haugen in five rounds in Mexico.

November 5, 1994: George Foreman, 45, becomes the oldest heavyweight titlist by defeating Michael Moorer via knockout in 10.

June 28, 1997: Evander Holyfield wins by disqualification over Mike Tyson, after Tyson bites off a piece of Holyfield's ear.

Other happenings: Oscar De la Hoya wins a gold medal at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and begins his pro career ... Mike Tyson serves a prison term after a highly publicized rape trial ... The Riddick Bowe-Holyfield trilogy thrills fans during Tyson's incarceration ... IBF president Bob Lee resigns upon being convicted of taking bribes in exchange for high boxer rankings.



George Foreman became the oldest heavyweight champion at 45 when he stopped Michael Moorer in 1994.

TOP 10 (1990-99)

1. PERNELL WHITAKER

Decade Record: 20-2-1, 1 no contest

Titles: IBF/WBC lightweight (1989-92); WBA lightweight (1990-92); IBF jr. welterweight (1992); WBC welterweight (1993-97); WBA jr. middleweight (1995)

Notable Opponents of the 90s: (Fred Pendleton, Azumah Nelson, Juan Nazario, Jorge Paez, Rafael Pineda, Buddy McGirt, Julio Cesar Chavez, Julio Cesar Vazquez, Diobelys Hurtado, Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad)

Background: A defensive specialist with a lethal body attack, Whitaker cleaned out the lightweight division before moving on to dominate at welterweight. Wins over Nelson and McGirt were excellent, but it was a 'draw' against Chavez that solidified his place in boxing history. The Vazquez wing is often overlooked and many felt he beat De La Hoya, taking his only clear loss from Trinidad while enduring a fractured jaw past his prime.

2. Roy Jones Jr.: Premiere athletic talent of his era ... belts at middleweight and super middleweight ... unified three titles at light heavyweight ... boasted comfortable win over Bernard Hopkins and toyed with James Toney.

3. James Toney: Inconsistency was baffling but his best was brilliant ... wins over Michael Nunn, Mike McCallum, Reggie Johnson, Iran Barkley, and Charles Williams are why fans forgive names like Tiberi and Thadzi.

4. Evander Holyfield: Won versions of the heavyweight crown three times (twice lineal) ... wins over George Foreman, Riddick Bowe, Tyson, Michael Moorer and Ray Mercer ... came close to beating Lewis well past his best in their rematch.

5. Julio Cesar Chavez: Still amazing for most of the first half of the decade ... cemented his legend with a stoppage of Meldrick Taylor ... humiliated Hector Camacho ... Whitaker undressing and a split pair with Frankie Randall began his decline.

6. Bernard Hopkins: Hindsight casts a better light on the middleweight reign Hopkins began after the Jones loss ... 10 IBF title defenses included a young Glen Johnson and veteran John David Jackson.

7. Felix Trinidad: 15 defenses of the IBF welterweight title ... gained the first decisive win ever posted over Whitaker ... came on late for a debated unification win over De La Hoya.

8. Ricardo Lopez: Defended the WBC strawweight belt 22 times ... added WBO and WBA straps in unification bouts with Alex Sanchez and Rosendo Alvarez ... won an IBF belt at 108 pounds.

9. Oscar De La Hoya: Titles in six weight classes ... THE RING's 1995 Fighter of the Year gave Genaro Hernandez his first loss ... toppled Chavez at 140 ... never gave Whitaker a rematch after close title win at welterweight ... gave up a lead against Trinidad.

10. Terry Norris: A slot that could easily be shared with Shane Mosley or Mark Johnson ... Norris's dominance at 154 for most of the decade stands out ... chin a massive liability but, when he was on, he could be almost as dazzling as Jones.

Cliff Rold

BONA FIDE SUPERSTAR

OSCAR IS THE BOXER OF THE '90S

By: **Bernard Fernandez** / THE RING: **September 1995**

Great promoters, by definition, are men of vision. They are able to take the long view and predict what people want before they know they want it.

And so it is for pugilistic prophet Bob Arum, who can see a day, probably years down the road, when boxing fans will want nothing so much as a matchup of Oscar De La Hoya, by then filled out to a robust 160 pounds and well on his way to his stated goal of six world championships in six weight classifications, and Dana Rosenblatt. De La Hoya, the only American gold medalist in boxing at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, presumably will have expanded his already considerable appeal among Hispanic and Anglo fans, and Rosenblatt will have proven himself a worthy successor to such great Jewish fighters as Benny Leonard and Barney Ross. Pay-per-view subscriptions in record numbers, to Arum's way of thinking, almost certainly will be ordered for a superfight in which so many ethnic bases are touched.

Shortly after De La Hoya solidified his claim to being the world's best lightweight with a two-round blowout of IBF champion Rafael Ruelas at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, and Rosenblatt retained that little bauble known as the WBC Continental-Americas middleweight title with an emphatic one-punch knockout of Chad Parker on the undercard, Arum allowed himself the luxury of thinking out loud.

"The dream fight for the biggest money of all-time is Oscar and Rosenblatt," Arum said with the enthusiasm of P.T. Barnum announcing the first American tour under his promotional banner by Tom Thumb or Jumbo the Elephant. "That's what I think about when I go to sleep at night."

Not everyone's dreams are made of this, of course. But only a visionary like Arum is capable of taking a leap of faith large enough to project Rosenblatt, a southpaw with commendable skills, as a latter-day melding of Benny Leonard and Marvelous Marvin Hagler.

No one, however, can say that Arum is a recent jumper onto the De La Hoya bandwagon. Nearly everyone predicted great things for "The Golden Boy" since—and in many cases, before—he became the Olympic 132-pound champion by decisioning Germany's Marco Rudolph. And no one was heaping out praise in larger doses than Arum, who figured De La Hoya's fluency in English and Spanish, matinee-idol good looks, appealing personality, and, oh, yes, vast array of ring abilities made for a box office attraction of unfathomable dimensions.

"He's got it all going for him right now," Arum said early in De La Hoya's professional career. "The Olympic thing, the punch, the looks: The package is good. He looks special, don't you think? I think he's going to be bigger than Sugar Ray Leonard or Marvin Hagler... he'll be the biggest in boxing history, except for Ali."

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/Vgibt on RingTV.com.

Wladimir Klitschko was among a growing number of non-Americans who came to dominate boxing over the past decade.

A NEW WAVE

Image: **Getty Images**

America began losing its stronghold on the business during the 2000s. Part of the problem was that America's top draws weren't getting the job done. Mike Tyson was still fighting, but he seemed like a cheap road show version of the original production. Roy Jones, who had seemed invincible, was losing on a regular basis. And even though Floyd Mayweather established himself as a big draw on pay-per-view, he didn't fight often enough. Most pay-per-view events turned out to be duds, and American Olympic teams were performing poorly. Fortunately, in other parts of the world, superstars were emerging.

From Mexico they came, and the United Kingdom. There were Germans, Poles, Danes, and Cubans. There were Filipinos and Hawaiians, Indonesians and Australians. They came from old Eastern bloc countries with names we couldn't pronounce. They won titles. They filled arenas. Their fans were fervent; their major bouts feeling a bit like 1980s stadium rock concerts, full of pomp and smoke machines and bloated grandeur. More significantly, these fighters became stars in their own countries without particularly caring about Las Vegas or HBO. For the first time, fighters from other countries were not dreaming of conquering America. Some came over and had great success, but if things didn't work out here, they could still fill arenas back home.

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

2000 – The magazine switches to a glossy, all-color format.

2005 – THE RING joins the Internet age with its original website.

2007 – THE RING is purchased in August by Sports & Entertainment Publications, the publishing arm of Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Enterprises.

The Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti trilogy rivaled that of Tony Zale and Rocky Graziano.

The globalization of boxing seemed positive, and it even hurled forth a star who has relished the spotlight as much as any fighter before him – Manny Pacquiao. But with fewer American fighters involved, the American press began treating boxing like a second-tier sport, as did the major American television networks. And each year, fewer Americans held title belts. Without American fighters to root for, American fandom noticeably diminished. There's also the chance that boxing's globalization could lead to the creation of more fiefdoms, more promoters unwilling to work with each other, more backroom politics, and even more bogus title belts.

On the other hand, maybe Manny Pacquiao is just the first of these international stars to delight us. Maybe there are more to come. Maybe someday a European heavyweight will throw punches the way Jack Dempsey once did.

Check back in 90 years. We'll have a better idea by then.

2000 - 2012 AT A GLANCE

June 8, 2002: Lennox Lewis defeats Mike Tyson by eighth round knockout in a highly anticipated bout.

May 7, 2005: In what is regarded by many as the

RING MAGAZINE TIMELINE

2008 – THE RING enters into a partnership with Yahoo! Sports to produce and operate a world-class website, RingTV.com.

best fight of the era, Diego Corrales defeats José Luis Castillo for the lightweight championship by 10th round knockout.

May 5, 2007: Floyd Mayweather Jr. defeats Oscar De La Hoya by split decision. The bout sets a record for pay-per-view buys at 2.4 million households.

Other happenings: It was a great era for rivalries, including Ward-Gatti, Barrera-Morales, Vazquez-Marquez, Pacquiao-Marquez, and Pacquiao-Morales ... as newspaper coverage shrank, internet coverage grew ... in an effort to clear up the confusion of so many belts being created by sanctioning bodies, THE RING reintroduces THE RING belt ... Bernard Hopkins sets a record, making his 20th middleweight title defense. He will also become the oldest fighter to win a title, beating Jean Pascal for the light heavyweight championship at age 46.

*- **Don Stradley** is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.*

TOP 10 (2000-12)

1. MANNY PACQUIAO
Decade Record: 23-1-1
Titles: IBF jr. featherweight (2001-03); RING featherweight (2003-2005); RING/WBC jr. lightweight (2008); WBC lightweight (2008); RING jr. welterweight (2009); WBO welterweight (2009-Present)
Notable Opponents of the 00s: (Lehlo Ledwaba, Agapito Sanchez, Marco Antonio Barrera, Juan Manuel Marquez, Erik Morales, Oscar De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton, Miguel Cotto)
Background: A former WBC and lineal flyweight champ of the 90s, Pacquiao exploded onto the global stage with a knockout of Ledwaba. By the end of the decade, he'd won titles in a record seven weight classes with a record four lineal crowns in different divisions, gone 5-1-1 against Marquez, Barrera, and Morales, became the first to stop De La Hoya, and blitzed Hatton and Cotto.

2. FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.: Wipeout of undefeated Diego Corrales at 130 came before a tough pair of wins over Jose Luis Castillo for the lightweight title ... belts at jr. welterweight, jr. middleweight, and the RING welterweight crown ... first to beat Ricky Hatton.

3. BERNARD HOPKINS: TKO of Tito Trinidad earned him undisputed honors at middleweight ... ultimately 20 defenses of the IBF belt ... past 40, took the RING light heavyweight belt from Antonio Tarver and gave Kelly Pavlik his first loss.

4. ERIK MORALES: Only man to defeat Pacquiao in the decade ... won unification bouts at 122 and 130 ... belts at 126 in between ... won the first of three with Marco Antonio Barrera, two of which were named Fight of the Year.

5. JOE CALZAGHE: Had the WBO strap at decade's start ... added every belt available at super middleweight, beating then-undefeated Jeff Lacy and Mikkel Kessler ... closely contested win over Hopkins for the RING light heavyweight belt iced an excellent career.

6. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ: Off the floor thrice for a draw and once for loss, gave Pacquiao hell in two fights ... belts at three weights, a RING lightweight title at the expense of Joel Casamayor, and the 2009 Fight of the Year against Juan Diaz.

7. ROY JONES JR.: Successfully defended his light heavyweight belts eight times ... snared a heavyweight belt from John Ruiz ... outgutted Antonio Tarver in the first of three before it all fell apart.

8. MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA: Won two of three against Morales, the second for the RING featherweight title ... gave lineal featherweight champ Naseem Hamed his lone loss ... unified two belts at 130 but couldn't sniff Pacquiao and fell short against Juan Manuel Marquez.

9. RAFAEL MARQUEZ: Rebounded from a knockout loss in 2000 with wins over Mark Johnson and Tim Austin for the IBF bantamweight belt ... defended seven times ... lost two out of three to Israel Vazquez, earning Fight of the Year honors twice.

10. PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM: Won WBC flyweight title with a first round knockout of Malcolm Tunacao in 2001 ... kept it for a record 17 consecutive defenses before losing a narrow decision to rival Daisuke Naito.

Cliff Rold

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

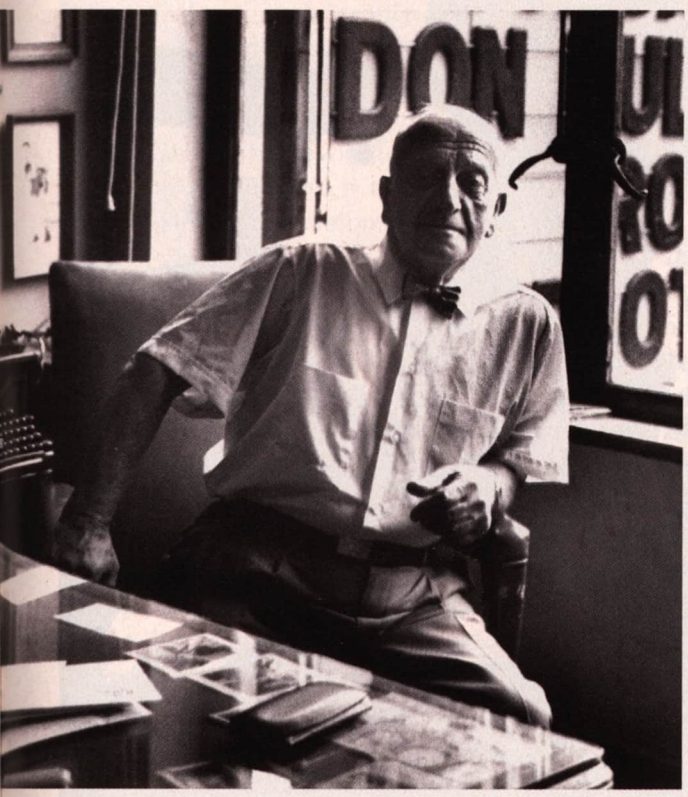
THE RING: **April 2008**

He could stand in the eye of a hurricane and it wouldn't even ruffle the fur on his chinchilla pants. His defense is so tight that if boxing had a Vezina trophy, he'd win it every year. At times his personality distracts from what he really is: an old-school boxing maestro with more slick moves than Jersey Joe Walcott. But not only did his bulletproof style help him win a pair of high-profile fights in 2007—Floyd Mayweather also invaded the mainstream with surprising success. There he was on talk shows, dance shows, Hollywood gossip shows, and reality shows. All that's left for Mayweather is to appear in his own comic strip. For all of these reasons, Floyd Mayweather has been chosen as THE RING's 2007 Fighter of the Year.

What is it about *Dancing With The Stars* that attracts fighters? First it was Evander Holyfield, then Laila Ali, and now Mayweather. Whether it was a genuine desire to show his dance moves, or a chance to hobnob with third-tier celebrities like Wayne Newton and Marie Osmond, Mayweather worked as hard for the ABC show as he does for his fights. He may overestimate what the show will do for his career, but there was no missing the smile on Mayweather's face as he warmed himself in the spotlight. In his mind, he finally had crossover appeal. Granted, a turn on *Dancing With The Stars* doesn't exactly put him in the Michael Jordan category, but Mayweather has become boxing's unlikeliest ambassador.

Of course, Mayweather's mainstream efforts would mean nothing without success in the ring. In that regard, he was mighty fine in 2007. In May he shared the spotlight with Oscar De La Hoya in the year's most widely hyped contest. That the fight was a disappointment in terms of action nearly overshadowed Mayweather's accomplishment: He defeated the most famous fighter of the decade and barely broke a sweat. In December, Mayweather stopped the previously unstoppable Ricky Hatton. As if to make up for the lack of excitement against De La Hoya, Mayweather fought hard against Hatton. He ended matters with a left hook from hell that sent Hatton bouncing around the ring like a pinball. It was one of those finishes that brought Sugar Ray Robinson to mind, a perfect punch that seemed to erupt out of the ether. It was a fitting apogee to a career year.

To read more on this subject go to http://goo.gl/k4R1C on RingTV.com.



MR. BOXING

NAT FLEISCHER AND HIS MAGAZINE

Words: **Dave McKee**

"WERE I TO LIVE MY LIFE OVER AGAIN, THERE IS NOTHING I WOULD CHERISH MORE THAN TO **BE A PART OF THE BOXING SCENE AND PLAY THE ROLE THAT HAS BEEN MINE DURING THE PAST HALF CENTURY.**"

- NAT FLEISCHER
(NOV. 3, 1887 - JUNE 25,1972)

In the early 1920's boxing was under attack in New York, and this was no trivial matter. The Walker Law had been signed by New York Governor Alfred E. Smith on May 25, 1920, creating legalized boxing, establishing licensing rules for fighters and non-combatants, and providing for many of the trappings of modern pugilism. Though this had rescued boxing in the state from three years of legal banishment following two decades of no-decision contests, the matter was hardly settled. Other forces were at work, and the winds that blew through the Senate chambers in Albany threatened to undo the Walker law and extinguish the fledgling flame of boxing's legitimacy.

Enter sports writer Nathaniel "Nat" Fleischer. Though hardly breaking the 5-foot mark, he was to become a giant in the professional fight game, earning the nickname "Mr. Boxing." Fleischer jabbed the keys of a typewriter rather than the faces of opponents, yet his name and accomplishments shine through the history of pugilism as brightly as any fighter's. As a young man he enjoyed a variety of sports, and he even stepped into the ring as an amateur. Representing the Oregon Athletic Club, he entered a contest with a boy 10 pounds heavier (who later proved to be a ringer) and was knocked out cold in moments. In his memoir, *50 Years at Ringside*, Fleischer recalled that this incident nearly precipitated a ban against boxing in the club. Much later, another near ban would set Fleischer squarely in the center of the boxing world.

Promoters who had found unregulated boxing most profitable had joined with reformist elements in government to undo the Walker Law, and impresario George Lewis "Tex" Rickard came to Fleischer for advice. Rickard had taken control of Madison Square Garden months after the legalization of boxing in New York, and his 10-year lease would mean little to him if he lost the right to stage boxing matches in the venerable building. Fleischer conceived a plan to create pamphlets for distribution throughout the New York legislature. And for this fight, Fleischer brought his own ringer. In fact, he brought an army of them: Damon Runyon, Bat Masterson, George B. Underwood and other luminaries of New York sports journalism lent their considerable aptitude with words and passion for boxing to the effort.

The success of the pamphlets inspired Fleischer and so, with partners Frank Coultry, Ike Dorgan and I.C. Brenner of *Golfer's Magazine*, he launched THE RING. According to his memoir, Fleischer had asked Rickard for financial backing, but the promoter refused.

Nat Flesicher shows off THE RING belts with **Tony Zale (left)** and **Marcel Cerdan.**

Fleischer had to put up the money himself. However, boxing historian Colleen Aycock argues, "If not for Rickard's stewardship and the help of the editors he loaned to the project, there might not be a RING Magazine." Rickard's fingerprints were certainly all over the magazine from the beginning: Coultry was treasurer of Madison Square Garden, Rickard's castle, and Dorgan was Rickard's publicity chief. And THE RING's offices? They were in the Garden (Bert Sugar, editor of THE RING from 1979 to 1984, remembers them as, "a wonderful little dirt bag of a place"). Perhaps most telling in terms of Rickard's importance was the inaugural issue's cover. In February, 1922, the first RING to hit newsstands bore the images of two men: Lord Lonsdale, first president of England's National Sporting Club and namesake of the Lonsdale championship belt, and Tex Rickard. From the perspective of Fleischer, Rickard deserved to be placed among the very highest company in the pantheon of boxing.

Within months, Coultry and Brenner had left the magazine, sensing it would be a fruitless endeavor. They could not have been more wrong. The magazine's format expanded quickly in the coming year, and circulation rose steadily. With it, Fleischer's gospel of boxing began reaching the masses, laying the groundwork for the magazine's eventual moniker, "The Bible of Boxing." Fleischer's influence expanded as well, in no small part due to his relationship to Rickard and his office in Madison Square Garden. Promoters, managers and fighters were constantly casting a shadow on his door, and he loved them all. His invitation to boxing people was wide open, and their acceptance of him is evidenced by their willingness to share their time, their experiences, and even the accumulated treasures of their lives in the sport; Fleischer's library and collection of memorabilia eventually constituted a first-rate museum of boxing.

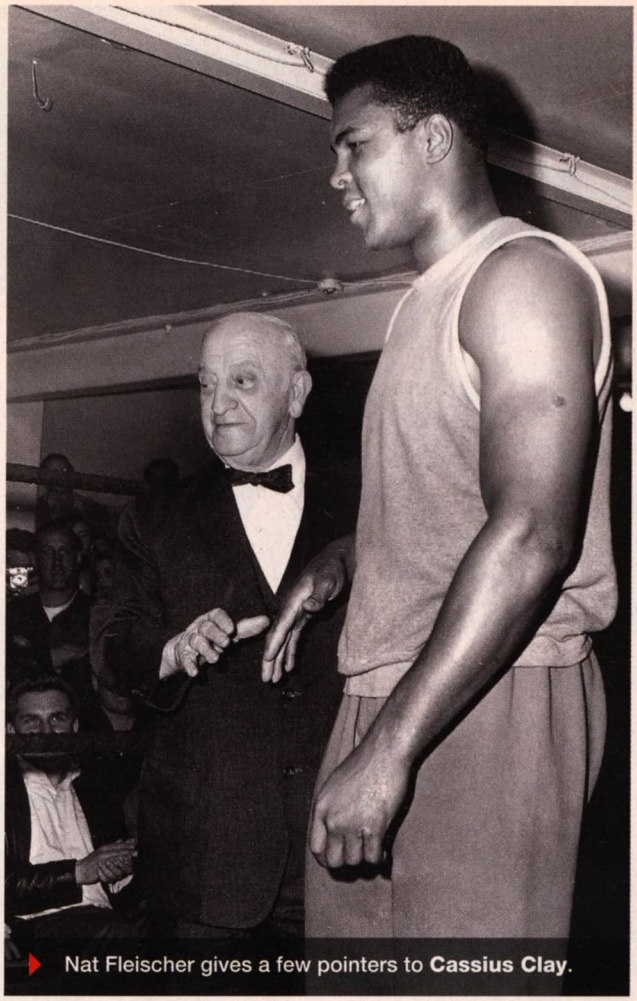
Despite the concerns of Coultry and Brenner, boxing was gaining in popularity, partly on the

considerable shoulders of heavyweight king, Jack Dempsey. The handsome former hobo had the heaviest hands in the sport and a captivatingly violent style. His bout with Georges Carpentier in 1921 had produced the first million dollar gate. Fleischer decided to award Dempsey a RING heavyweight world title belt shortly after the magazine came on line. In doing so, he both made a simple acknowledgment of Dempsey's status as champ and created a tradition that would, with another Fleischer invention, deeply impact boxing.

This second invention, which first appeared in 1925, was THE RING ratings. In the beginning Fleischer simply had Rickard compile the list of the very best fighters in each weight class, though this was problematic — Rickard had a fondness for the heavies, so he gave less attention to smaller fighters. Eventually the duties were given to Jack Dempsey, but Dempsey naturally suffered the same shortcomings as Rickard,. By 1933 THE RING's modern rankings system finally took shape, as Fleischer had a committee of boxing scribes from around the world contribute to a more nuanced compilation. With the eventual multiplicity of sanctioning bodies and consequent diversity of 'champions' decades later, it is this scheme that is seen by many as authoritative. Today, ESPN uses THE RING rankings on its boxing broadcasts. THE RING world championship belt is popular with both boxers and fans because it is awarded without sanctioning fees and by a transparent system.

Like Joe Grim, remembered by Fleischer for his courage in taking every blow Bob Fitzsimmons could land and forcing a no-contest by refusing to fall, THE RING survived hard circumstances, and even thrived under Fleischer's leadership. By 1930, Fleischer had become sole owner of the magazine. The Great Depression produced wholesale destruction in business, but THE RING survived. World War II saw rationing in every area of manufacturing and the suspension of numerous publications, but Fleischer found in the war an opportunity to serve a patriotic duty and help the cause of boxing.

Bert Sugar speaks fondly of Fleischer's commitment to the troops during WWII. Boxing had long been an important part of military training and recreation (this fact had been instrumental in the arguments to install the Walker Law two decades previously). Sugar recalls, "Every base had boxing. Servicemen engaged in tournaments around the world in military camps." Their exploits were printed in THE RING, and the magazine was sent free of charge to servicemen in camps and hospitals. In *50 Years at Ringside* Fleischer writes, "we organized THE RING's Servicemen's Athletic Fund, which purchased athletic paraphernalia for camps in all parts of the world." Sugar notes that when the men from these camps returned to the U.S. at the close of hostilities, circulation of THE RING exploded.



Nat Fleischer gives a few pointers to **Cassius Clay**.

Fleischer was a prodigious writer, with dozens of published works and many others unpublished, in the hands of historians who cherish their luck in owning the documents. One such unpublished document is the 714 page behemoth, 'History of New York in Boxing: Crime and Politics in Boxing/Boxing's Rise from 1850 to Walker Law.' Reviews of Fleischer's work are mixed. Even his memoir is noted for its self-aggrandizing style. One struggles to find much of anything negative in his writings about any boxer. Still, his significance as an author is not to be understated. From 1938 to 1947 Fleischer wrote the five-volume *Black Dynamite: The Story of the Negro in Boxing*. It remains a great addition to the history of boxing, ground-breaking in its acknowledgment of the contributions of black fighters.

Fleischer had a love affair with boxing — at every turn it was evident. Color, and even politics, had no apparent sway over his passion. Nigel Collins, editor of THE RING from 1985-1990 and from 1997-2011 wrote of Fleischer's attitude with regard to Muhammad

Nat Fleischer congratulates RING champion **Joe Frazier**.

Ali's troubles, "...Fleischer made his most significant stand against injustice when he continued to recognize Muhammad Ali as heavyweight champion of the world at a time virtually every athletic commission and governing body had stripped him of the title." When Ali won in court and returned to the ring, Fleischer's position was vindicated. The underlying logic is the same as found in the awarding world championships based on THE RING rankings. Performance in the squared circle determines who is champion — nothing else.

Nat Fleischer's work took him around the world. He met presidents and kings. He refereed bouts. He was friends with people at all levels of the sport. Fleischer claims that he personally witnessed almost every heavyweight championship bout. Tex Rickard employed him as a scout, a tidy bit of work that brought the somewhat significant figure Max Schmelling to the states.

Fleischer's contribution to boxing is impossible to calculate. His magazine, born of a pamphlet intended to save boxing in New York, has given form and vitality to the sport for 90 years. He stated in the opening pages of his memoir: "There is romance in boxing. There is a spectacular glamor to the fight parade as it rolls along through the years." That is how he saw it. The sport is blessed to have benefited from his unique passion and vision for so many decades. ■

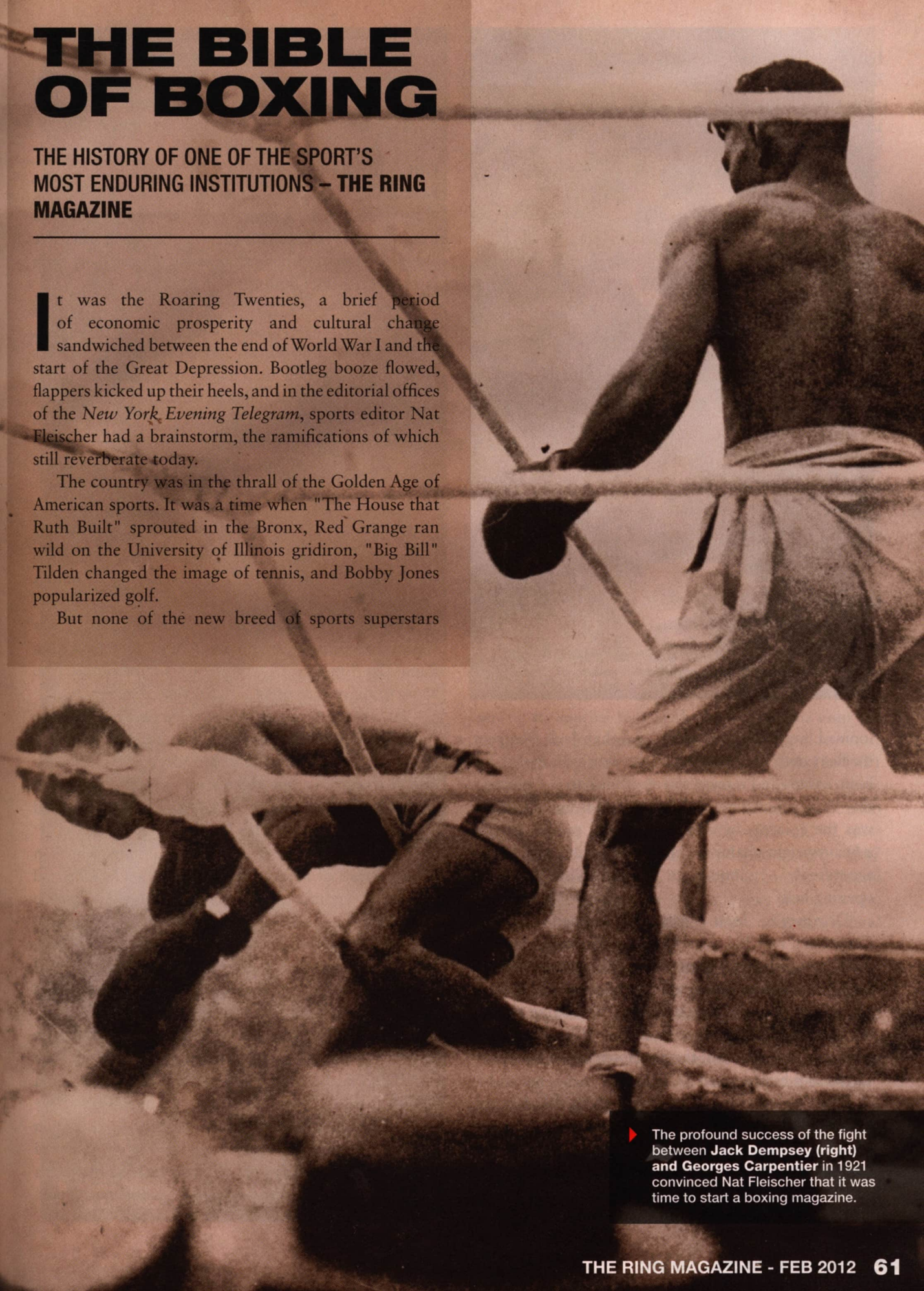
THE BIBLE OF BOXING

THE HISTORY OF ONE OF THE SPORT'S MOST ENDURING INSTITUTIONS – THE RING MAGAZINE

It was the Roaring Twenties, a brief period of economic prosperity and cultural change sandwiched between the end of World War I and the start of the Great Depression. Bootleg booze flowed, flappers kicked up their heels, and in the editorial offices of the *New York Evening Telegram*, sports editor Nat Fleischer had a brainstorm, the ramifications of which still reverberate today.

The country was in the thrall of the Golden Age of American sports. It was a time when "The House that Ruth Built" sprouted in the Bronx, Red Grange ran wild on the University of Illinois gridiron, "Big Bill" Tilden changed the image of tennis, and Bobby Jones popularized golf.

But none of the new breed of sports superstars



The profound success of the fight between **Jack Dempsey (right) and Georges Carpentier** in 1921 convinced Nat Fleischer that it was time to start a boxing magazine.

Tex Rickard, who promoted Dempsey-Carpentier, provided financial backing for the magazine.

loomed larger in the peoples' eyes than Jack Dempsey, the heavyweight champion of the world. Forged in the hobo camps and mining towns of his native Colorado, the vicious-punching, ruggedly handsome Dempsey was the epitome of what the general public thought a heavyweight champion should look like, and fought accordingly – gunning for the knockout from the opening bell.

Dempsey's bout with Frenchman Georges Carpentier in 1921 was boxing's first million-dollar gate, a watershed event that did not escape the attention of Fleischer, an ardent follower of the sport. He realized that the time had come for boxing to have its own publication, and found a willing financial backer in Tex Rickard, the promoter of the Dempsey-Carpentier blockbuster.

Together with Rickard's press agent, Ike Dorgan, Fleischer launched THE RING magazine on February 15, 1922. It was a modest 24-page publication, costing twenty cents, but set lofty goals from the start.

"It is a magazine that has an idea, a great and glowing idea, that seeks to put and keep boxing in its rightful niche in sport," read the unsigned foreword of the maiden issue, which also promised to "speak for, fight for, foster, up-build, and perpetuate" boxing. In many ways, these remain the publication's guiding principles, 90 years after they were written.

GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Bolstered by Fleischer's immense knowledge of boxing and reputation for honesty, THE RING was a success from the start and quickly grew from a newsletter-like pamphlet to a full-fledged newsstand magazine with international distribution.

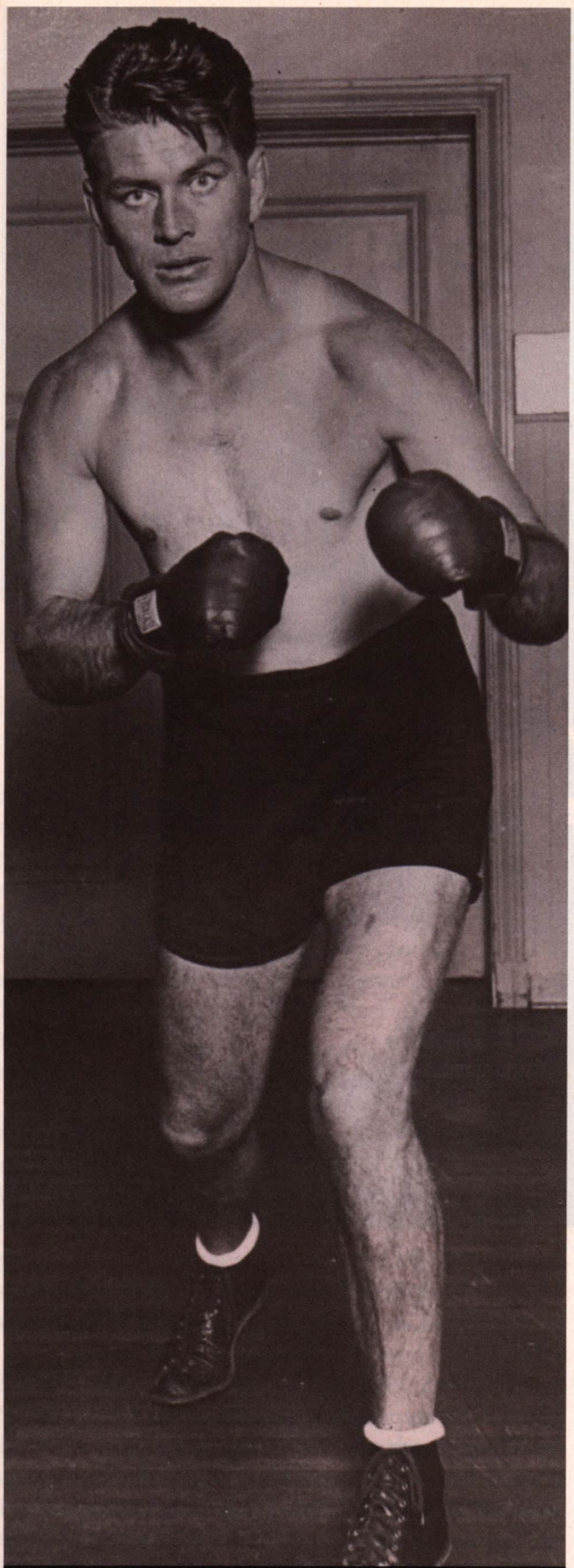
Fleischer was a man of many parts: crusading journalist, trend-setter, and, when it came to boxing, super salesman. He quickly strengthened THE RING's brand by instituting the custom of presenting world champions with a belt emblazoned with the magazine's distinctive logo. The very first Ring belt was given to Dempsey shortly after the launch of the magazine, with flyweight champion Pancho Villa receiving the second. But that was just the start of a series of innovations.

Inspired by Walter Camp's annual All-America football team, Fleischer pioneered the concept of boxing rankings and published the very first list of its kind in the February 1925 issue. Like the magazine, the ratings were sponsored by Rickard, and for a few years signed by Dempsey. "The Manassa Mauler" did not actually compile the ratings (he apparently didn't know enough about the "little guys"), but lent his name to them to show support and enhance their credibility.

The association with Rickard led to a problem the following year when a national weekly tried to buy the ratings from the promoter for $5,000. Rickard accepted the offer, but was forced to back down when THE RING threatened to obtain a court-ordered injunction and also sue for damages.

When Rickard died in 1929, Jimmy Johnston became head of Madison Square Garden boxing and also briefly sponsored THE RING ratings. At first, the ratings were published annually, but by 1930 they had become a regular part of every issue. As time passed, sponsorship was dropped and Fleischer and his staff compiled the ratings, with help from the magazine's worldwide network of correspondents.

In 1928, THE RING initiated another tradition when it named reigning heavyweight champion Gene Tunney as Fighter of the Year. The practice proved a popular one, and when the magazine added Fight of the Year and Round of the Year in 1945, the publication of the annual awards issue became a highly anticipated event. Today, the list of annual awards has grown to a total of seven with the addition of Knockout, Upset, Comeback and Event.



Gene Tunney became the first RING Fighter of the Year in 1928.

MR. BOXING

Fleischer did not restrict his role to that of editor and publisher. He became boxing's globetrotting goodwill ambassador, traveling around the world, covering fights in exotic locales, hobnobbing with heads of state, helping make important matches, occasionally refereeing, and always furthering the cause of the Sweet Science.

Although he was an old-fashioned, Victorian man, Fleischer's sense of fair play extended to boxers of all races. He championed the cause of black heavyweight contender Harry Wills, who clearly deserved a shot at Dempsey, but, despite Fleischer's efforts, never got it.

In 1938, Fleischer wrote and published the first volume of *Black Dynamite: The Story of the Negro In Boxing*, a pioneering work, which by the time the fifth and final volume was published in 1947 had comprehensively documented black boxers' gigantic contribution to the sport.

It was, however, in the 1960s that Fleischer made his most significant stand against injustice, when he continued to recognize Muhammad Ali as heavyweight champion of the world at a time when virtually every athletic commission and governing body had stripped him of the title.

Fleischer did not support Ali's refusal to be drafted into the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. What he did support was everybody's right to his or her day in court. Ali appealed his draft dodging conviction, and Fleischer maintained that it would be wrong to deprive him of the championship until the final verdict was handed down.

When the case reached the Supreme Court in 1971 and the justices ruled unanimously in Ali's favor, Fleischer wrote that THE RING "found justification for its stance in the face of the epidemic of title-rescinding action which followed [Ali's] April 1967 conviction of a felony. ... THE RING, corporately, and I, personally, welcome back to the ranks of boxers who are free of movement, and free of the onus of a federal felony, Cassius Clay."

The quirky nature of Fleischer's personality can be found in those few lines. He was progressive enough to put his reputation, and the reputation of THE RING, on the line when he believed it was the right thing to do – but old-fashioned enough to insist on calling Ali by his Christian name years after Ali had converted to Islam.

Fleischer died of heart disease on June 25, 1972, his final editorial appearing in the September edition. After almost 50 years at the helm of "The Bible of Boxing," the man who had become known as Mr. Boxing was gone. His leadership and ethical values were soon sorely missed.

Nat Fleischer awarded the first RING belt to Jack Dempsey.

A BREACH OF TRUST

Fleischer's son-in-law, Nat Loubet, who was managing editor at the time of Fleischer's death, succeeded him as both editor and publisher. Loubet's tenure was marked by financial growth and controversy.

With Ali as heavyweight champion and boxing still a regular part of network TV programming, the sport thrived during the 1970s. In 1976 THE RING entered into a 10-year licensing agreement with a Venezuelan company to publish a Spanish-language version of THE RING. It appeared that the magazine was headed for unprecedented growth, but trouble was brewing.

In the December '76 issue, THE RING announced its participation in the Don King/ABC-TV United States Tournament of Champions, which was designed to crown U.S. champs in eight weight classes. King would promote, ABC would televise, and THE RING would supply ratings, records and a belt to the winners. Loubet and Associate Editor John Ort were also members of the tournament's Executive Committee, which was chaired by James A. Farley, head of the New York State Athletic Commission.

The tournament began on January 16, 1977 aboard the *USS Lexington*, a Navy aircraft carrier docked in

Bert Randolph Sugar, who became editor of THE RING in 1979, helped restore the magazine's credibility after a corruption scandal.

Pensacola, Florida. Another card followed in February, and two more in March before the tournament was suspended (and eventually canceled) amid allegations of kickbacks, padded records and favoritism toward house fighters.

There were several investigations into the matter, but no criminal or civil charges were ever lodged. It was, however, revealed that Ort had received $5,000 from King, which, according to Loubet, was for "work outside the contract between THE RING and Don King."

Despite no hard evidence that THE RING had done anything illegal, the publication came away from the affair with its integrity badly compromised. The lingering stench did not begin to dissipate until 1979, when a group of investors, headed by retired basketball great Dave DeBusschere, purchased THE RING from the Loubet family and installed Bert Randolph Sugar as editor and publisher.

FIGHTING BACK

Sugar, a convivial raconteur with a deep knowledge and love of the sport, did much to restore the publication's credibility by purging it of anybody who had been involved in the scandal. He also vastly improved both the writing and graphic content of the magazine, but it floundered financially, and Sugar was replaced by Randy Gordon starting with the March 1984 issue.

Gordon's term lasted less than a year, and Nigel Collins, who had joined the staff in '84, made his debut as editor in the January 1985 issue. The staff and budget was slashed, and thanks in part to the emergence of Mike Tyson and the subsequent renewed interest in boxing, THE RING survived and even made progress toward raising its profile.

Collins reinstated the policy of awarding RING championship belts in 1988, and experimented with a return to the traditional eight weight divisions. The move garnered support from a number of significant media outlets, including *Sports Illustrated*, NBC Sports, and Jack Fiske, longtime boxing writer for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who wrote, "THE RING magazine has come up with an idea whose time has come. Although not original, it's worthwhile and overdue."

Nonetheless, the financial hole inherited from previous administrations proved too deep to dig out of, and in 1990 THE RING was purchased by Stanley Weston, who worked for Fleischer in his youth but had broken away and formed his own publishing company. Weston moved the operation from Manhattan to Long Island and made Stu Saks publisher and Steve Farhood editor.

The new team produced an excellent product for the next 3½ years, but following the July 1993 issue, THE RING was sold to Kappa Publishing and the editorial offices relocated to Blue Bell, Pa., approximately 35 miles outside of Philadelphia. Saks and Farhood stayed on, and Collins returned as managing editor.

A BOLD NEW FUTURE

After the publication of the December 1997 issue, Farhood left to pursue a career in television, and Collins began his second term as editor-in-chief. Three years later, THE RING revitalized its image by ditching pulp paper and switching to a glossy, all-color format.

The tradition of awarding Ring championship belts had again been shelved, so, in an effort to simplify a sport that had become tangled with multiple titleholders in virtually every division, THE RING launched its new Championship Policy in the April 2002 issue. (See Ratings for an explanation of the policy.)

The Championship Policy gradually gained traction, in part thanks to ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, which adopted it along with the ratings. The Policy also found favor with a number of top fighters who preferred THE RING championship for its lack of sanctioning fees and mandatory challengers.

Another major change arrived in August 2007 when THE RING was sold to Sports & Entertainment Publications, the publishing arm of Golden Boy Enterprises. The deal aroused some concern over potential conflicts of interest from having the magazine's ownership pass to one of the sport's

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THE RING belt still has meaning for fighters – including Bernard Hopkins – 90 years after the first one was presented. Image: **Getty Images**

foremost promoters; fans and boxing insiders feared that it signalled the end of the autonomy that has been THE RING's hallmark for 86 years. In response, both Oscar De La Hoya and Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer offered statements, which included the promise that the magazine would be "held in an editorial trust where it will be operating totally independent of any influence" and that to do otherwise would "destroy our investment."

THE RING's online presence began in July 2005 with its original Web site (thering-online.com), a technological advance that made possible another innovation: weekly ratings updates, instantly available throughout the world. The site then entered a partnership with Yahoo! Sports in 2008 and became one of the foremost boxing destinations on the web, offering news, commentary, video and ratings at a new address: RingTV.com. Since then it has expanded further to include radio shows and live broadcasts.

In 2011, veteran boxing writer Michael Rosenthal became the editor of THE RING magazine, while Doug Fischer, another longtime writer and pioneer in the area of online boxing coverage, assumed the position of editor for the Web site. Now, with its feet planted firmly in both worlds, the venerable publication looks to a future in which it can reach an audience larger than ever before, allowing it to serve boxing and its readership in ways that even a visionary like Nat Fleischer could never have imagined. ■

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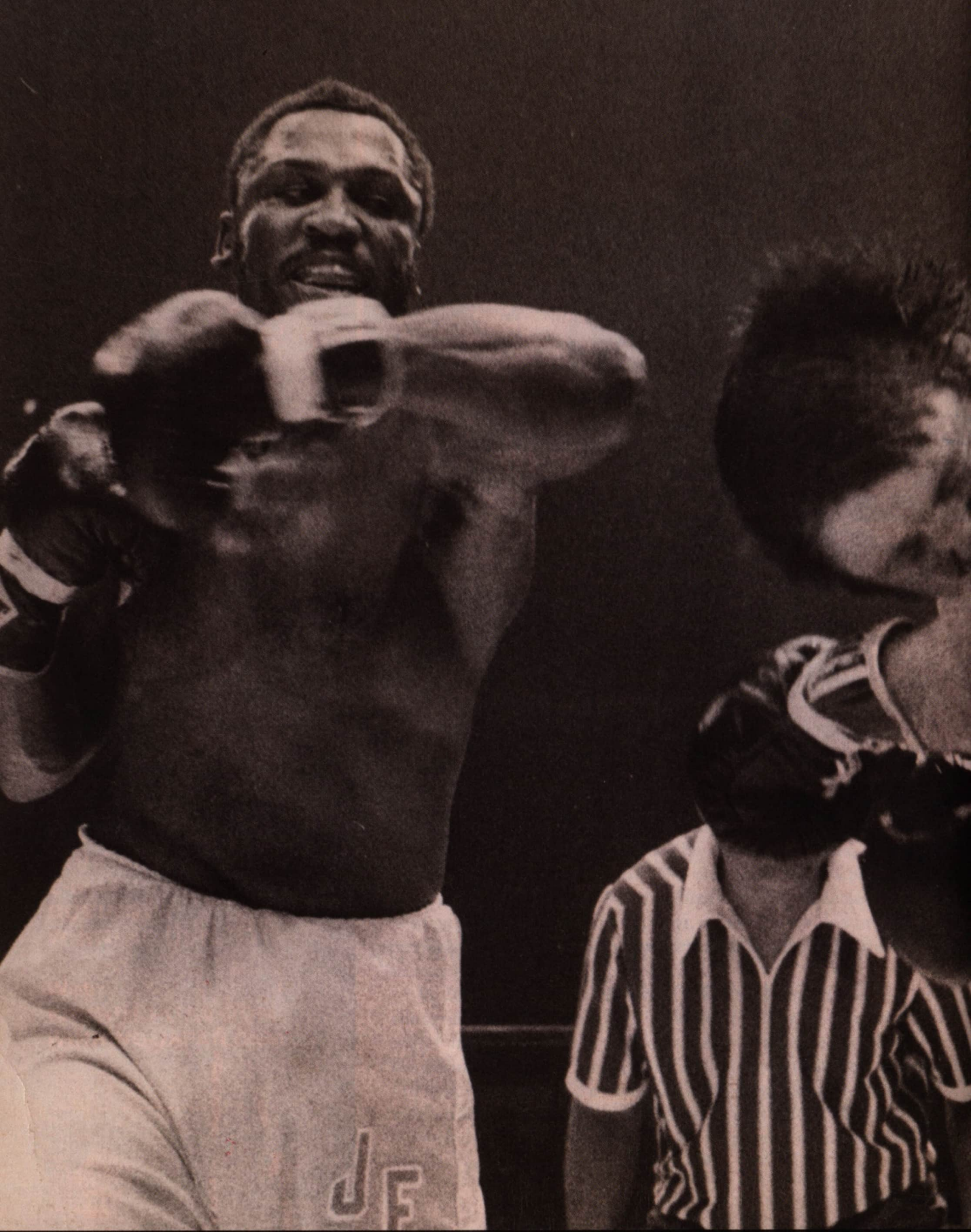


Joe Frazier's fury could be found in his lethal left hook, here finding the head of Jerry Quarry.

SMOKIN' JOE'S FIRE ALWAYS BURNED

JOE FRAZIER: 1944-2011

Words: **Bernard Fernandez**

Joe Frazier had a saying about the perils of boxing: "You'll get your brain shook, your money took and your name in the undertaker's book."

If that sounds somewhat cynical, well, it was meant to. Even the best of the best understand that the fight game is a hurt business, that fortunes can be lost outside the ring as easily as they are won inside it, and that the physical price that boxers often pay in later life for absorbing so much punishment can be steep.

They laid Smokin' Joe to rest on Nov. 14 in his adopted hometown of Philadelphia. An estimated crowd of 3,500 family members, friends and well-wishers nearly filled the massive Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church to bid farewell to the former heavyweight champion, who was 67 when he lost his final fight, against liver cancer, seven days earlier. It was the one battle even someone as legendarily determined and courageous as this sharecropper's son had no chance of winning, so advanced was the disease when it was discovered barely a month earlier. Les Wolff, Frazier's business manager, said Joe had lost 50 pounds and had so deteriorated that the memorial service was held with a closed casket.

Muhammad Ali, 69, was among the many dignitaries in attendance. But Ali, who went to war with Smokin' Joe three times in the most celebrated arch-rivalry in boxing history, also showed the effects of his brutal profession. The man who once bragged that he could float like a butterfly and sting like a bee needed assistance to stand and rise, and his once-booming voice has long since been reduced to a barely comprehensive whisper. To all external appearances, it seemed as if Ali also is entering the final rounds of his earthly existence, his competition with Frazier destined

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO READ MORE ABOUT JOE FRAZIER AT RINGTV.COM.

Frazier and **Muhammad Ali** are inextricably linked in boxing lore.

to be continued in the hereafter, and possibly sooner rather than later.

Joe Frazier's take on where boxing eventually would lead him was now complete; his name was in the undertaker's book. Although his mind remained clear and lucid to the very end, his speech was slurred, no doubt in large part because of his professional willingness to take four and five punches to land one. Brain shook? Check. And also check the box about his money being took. Unwise investments had drained much of the fortune he had earned with his fists, and several years earlier he had had to sell his North Philadelphia gym, which now houses a furniture store that boasts of its "knockout prices."

But the Rev. Allyn E. Waller Sr., pastor of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, in a stirring eulogy, urged any would-be snifflers in the pews to forget any thought of crying. Joe Frazier, he said, had risen to heights few individuals ever attain, and he had done much good in the time he had been allotted. That should be a cause for celebration, not for tears. Few men get to decide the particulars of their death, but all of us have a say in how we conduct our lives.

"You can't let a bad round keep you down," Rev. Waller said, praising Frazier as much for how he kept rising from the six knockdowns he endured at the hands of George Foreman during his title-changing loss on Jan. 22, 1973, in Kingston, Jamaica, as for the leaping left hook that floored Ali in the 15th round of their March 8, 1971, "Fight of the Century" in Madison Square Garden. "One of the things that Joe Frazier teaches us is how to live after your struggle."

Joe Frazier always knew what it meant to struggle. He was the 13th of 13 children born to Rubin and Dolly Frazier in Beaufort, S.C., during a time when institutionalized segregation further reduced the already-limited opportunities for a black child to rise above his circumstances. He had to drop out of school in the sixth grade to assist his father, who had lost his left arm in an accident, in putting food on the family

table. That meant long hours of picking vegetables and helping his dad, who also drove a truck for a construction company, however he could.

But Joe, then known to his parents and siblings as "Billy Boy," was strong and he had a work ethic baked and hardened under an unforgiving Southern sun. He knew that men of color, Sugar Ray Robinson and Joe Louis, had literally fought their way out of furrowed fields and filthy factories to become heroes to members of their race. And since Frazier couldn't play baseball like Jackie Robinson or Josh Gibson, he would make his escape with his fists. So he fashioned a makeshift heavy bag out of a burlap sack filled with corncobs and other throwaway materials, returning from his day's labors to hammer at it with the relentlessness that would become his pugilistic trademark.

"When Joe would hit that bag, the whole tree shook," another former heavyweight champion, Michael Spinks, whose own boxing dream was formed in a St. Louis ghetto, said at Frazier's memorial service.

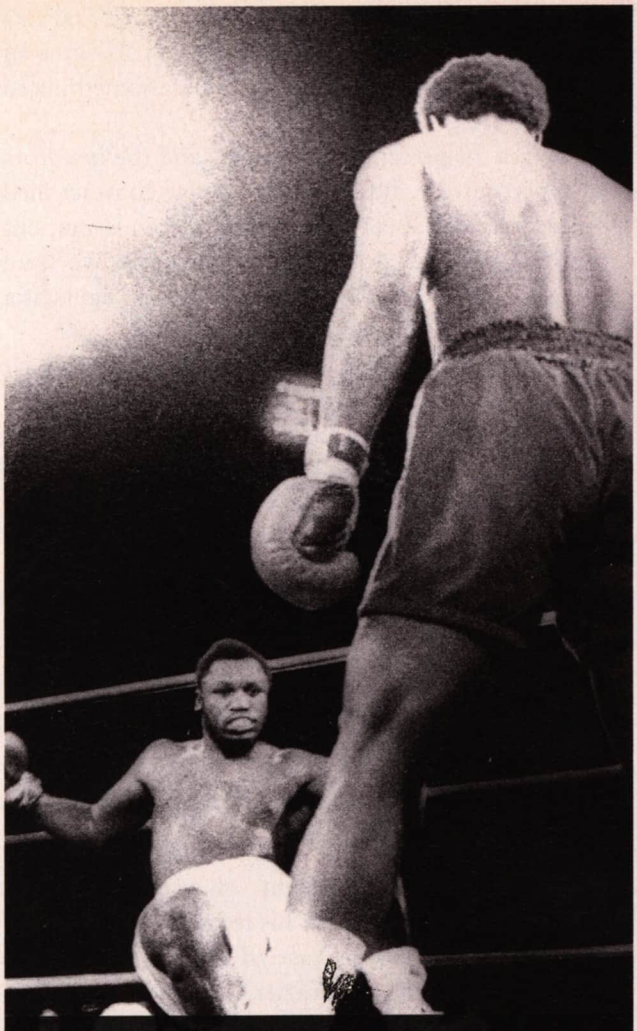
But to find his destiny, Joe Frazier would have to move north, to a big city, someplace where there would be gyms filled with other desperate young men and, hopefully, someone knowledgeable enough to refine his natural power with a sprinkling of boxing fundamentals.

For a time, Frazier found himself in New York, where he had been preceded by an older brother, Tommy. But eventually he headed a hundred miles south, to Philadelphia, where he found all the elements he needed to piece together what was to become a legendary career.

Not that any of what was to follow came easily. To make ends meet, he had to work for a time in a slaughterhouse, exchanging the burlap sack for slabs of hanging beef when his co-workers weren't around. Sylvester Stallone, a Philly guy who wrote and starred in the "Rocky" movies, might have been primarily inspired by the real-life tale of Chuck Wepner, but he lifted the beef-banging sequences straight from Smokin' Joe.

From there it was on to the 1964 U.S. Olympic Boxing Trials in New York, where Frazier again had to swallow a big dose of disappointment; he was beaten out of a berth on the American team that would compete in Tokyo by soft-punching Buster Mathis, whose pitty-pat punches landed more frequently and thus accrued more points in the amateur scoring system than the loaded-up shots winged by Frazier.

"Joe was so disgusted after losing to Buster he wanted to quit boxing," recalled Gene Kilroy, later Muhammad Ali's business manager, who was attached to U.S. Army boxers at the Trials. "He said, 'I want to get out of this. I've had enough.' But then Buster broke his hand, Joe goes to Japan in his place and wins the gold medal. I always wondered if Joe really would have quit boxing if things hadn't worked out as they did."



Frazier couldn't overcome the immense power of **George Foreman**, who stopped Smokin' Joe twice.

Frazier returned to Philadelphia, but not to a hero's welcome. There literally was no one at the airport to greet him. And when he went to get his old job at the slaughterhouse, the manager said he couldn't take him back, gold medal or not, because he had busted a thumb in the Olympics and you can't push slabs of beef around with a bum hand.

Enter a Philadelphia politician named Thatcher Longstreth, a wealthy patrician partial to bow ties and wing-tipped shoes. Longstreth believed something should be done to assist a local lad who had represented his country so capably in the Olympics.

"Joe had children – I don't recall how many it was then, maybe just Jacqui and Marvis – and he couldn't afford to buy them presents for Christmas," said Joe Hand Sr., who became one of the original investors in

Cloverlay, the company formed to support Frazier's early professional career. "Thatcher went to some of his rich friends and asked them to donate something to Joe for his kids.

"Joe got 70 percent of his purses and the investors got 30 percent. He didn't have a regular contract filed with the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, but a personal-services contract with Cloverlay. We were responsible for seeing that he arrived for his fights at a designated date and time."

Almost from the start, Joe the pro found himself on a collision course with Ali, whose fluid moves and blinding combinations were in stark contrast to Frazier's bobbing and weaving, bomb-throwing aggression. But when Ali found himself out of boxing, stripped of his heavyweight championship and suspended for three years for his refusal to be inducted into the armed forces because of religious beliefs, he found a surprising ally in Frazier.

It was Frazier who lent a cash-strapped Ali $2,000, and it was Frazier who vigorously lobbied to have Ali's license restored. But as soon as a Supreme Court ruling allowed Ali back into boxing, he began slinging insults as Frazier, who had ascended to the title Ali had involuntarily relinquished, during those politically and racially charged times.

"Ali didn't hate anybody, but Joe couldn't get past some of the things he said for, you know, publicity purposes," Kilroy said of the hard feelings Frazier harbored for so long against Ali and, reports to the contrary notwithstanding, might have taken with him to his grave. "Joe told me, 'How would you like it if your kids went to school and the other kids were calling you ignorant and a gorilla?' He always thought Ali carried the act way too far."

When the two undefeated fighters finally shared a ring in the "Fight of the Century," on March 8, 1971, it was a scene perhaps unmatched in the history of boxing.

"That was, and still is, the biggest sporting event of all time," Hand recalled. "There's nothing that compares to the drama and the excitement of that night. Burt Lancaster, the movie star, was a color announcer for the telecast. Frank Sinatra was taking photos for Life magazine. To get a ringside seat – and there were no exceptions – you had to wear formal attire, a tuxedo or an evening gown."

Frazier's best-remembered left hook sent Ali crashing to the canvas in the 15th round, the exclamation point to the greatest victory of a career during which he went 32-4-1, with 27 knockouts. But while there would be other memorable bouts for Smokin' Joe – most notably the rubber match in his trilogy with Ali, the "Thrilla in Manila," there would be nothing to compare with that magical evening in the Garden.

"But both fighters never were the same after that night," Hand said.

Maybe it's an equitable tradeoff, a moment when the earth stood still just long enough for two men to be entwined forever as historical partners, in exchange for anything to follow that might not be quite so glorious and rewarding. Together, Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali scaled a mountain most mere mortals can only gaze up at.

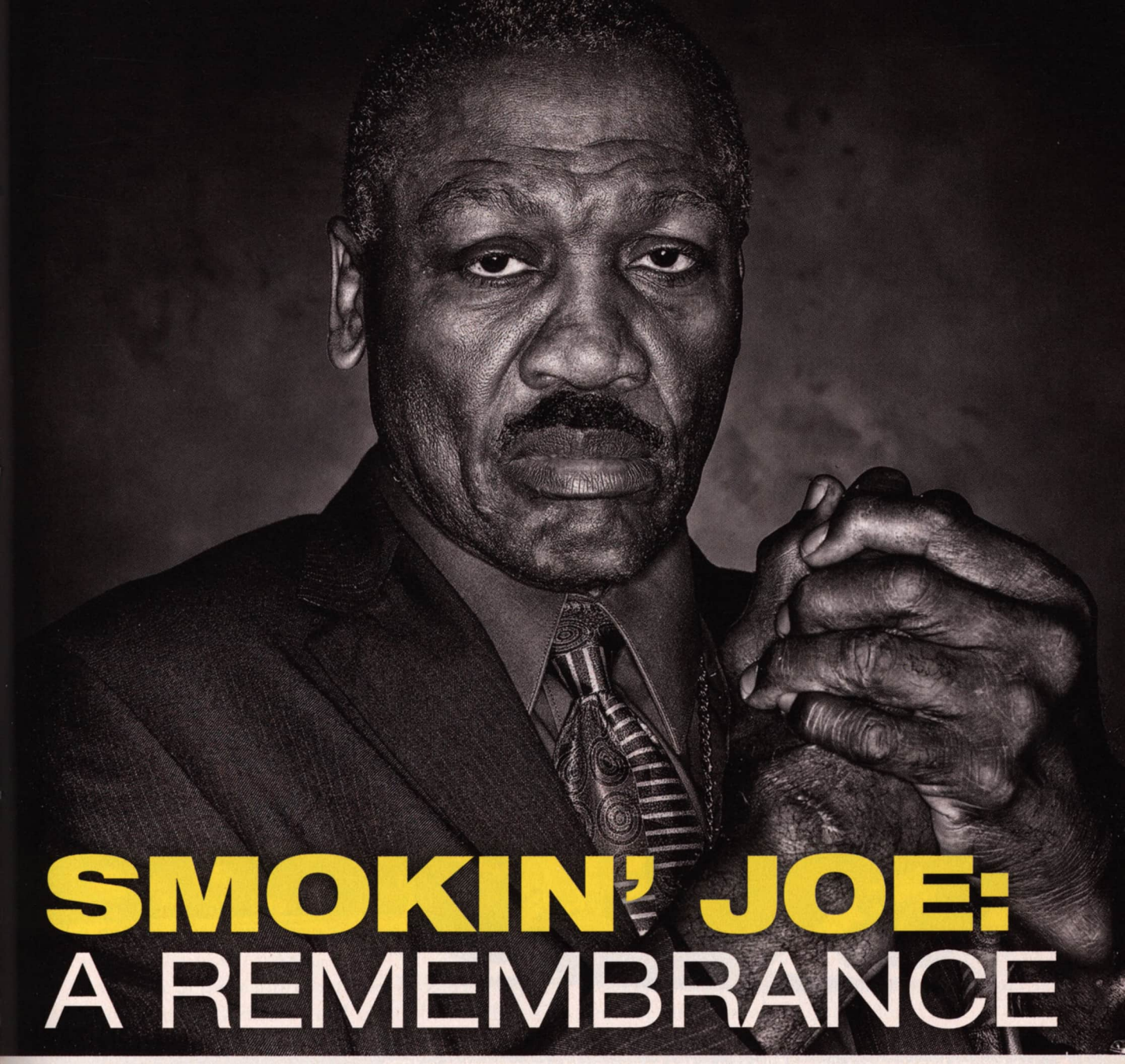
Ali, frail and trembling though he might be because of the Parkinson's syndrome that has robbed him of his once-boundless vitality, remains the larger-than-life figure forever cloaked by the aura of greatness. Joe Frazier, though, was special because he never thought he was anything special. He was the guy who stopped on the side of the road to help total strangers replace a flat tire, who never turned down an autograph request, who always smiled when he introduced himself as "Smokin' Joe Frazier, sharp as a razor."

He will be remembered for all the men he knocked down with that signature left hook, but also for the times he kept getting up from those floorings by Foreman, or rising from the financial and emotional setbacks that can befall anyone.

Rubin and Dolly's son never quit fighting, not to the very end. Cancer didn't knock him out, it merely outpointed him. As legacies go, it isn't just about the victories you attain. It's about always fighting the good fight and not giving up on yourself when it would be easy to do so.

Rest in peace, Smoke. You've earned it. ■

"JOE TOLD ME,`HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT IF YOUR KIDS WENT TO SCHOOL AND THE OTHER KIDS WERE CALLING YOU IGNORANT AND A GORILLA?' HE ALWAYS THOUGHT ALI CARRIED THE ACT WAY TOO FAR."



SMOKIN' JOE: A REMEMBRANCE

A LEGENDARY PHILADELPHIA SPORTS WRITER REFLECTS FONDLY ON 'A TERRIFIC BOXER, A GOOD MAN AND A GOOD FRIEND'

Words: **Stan Hochman** / Image: **Howard Schatz**

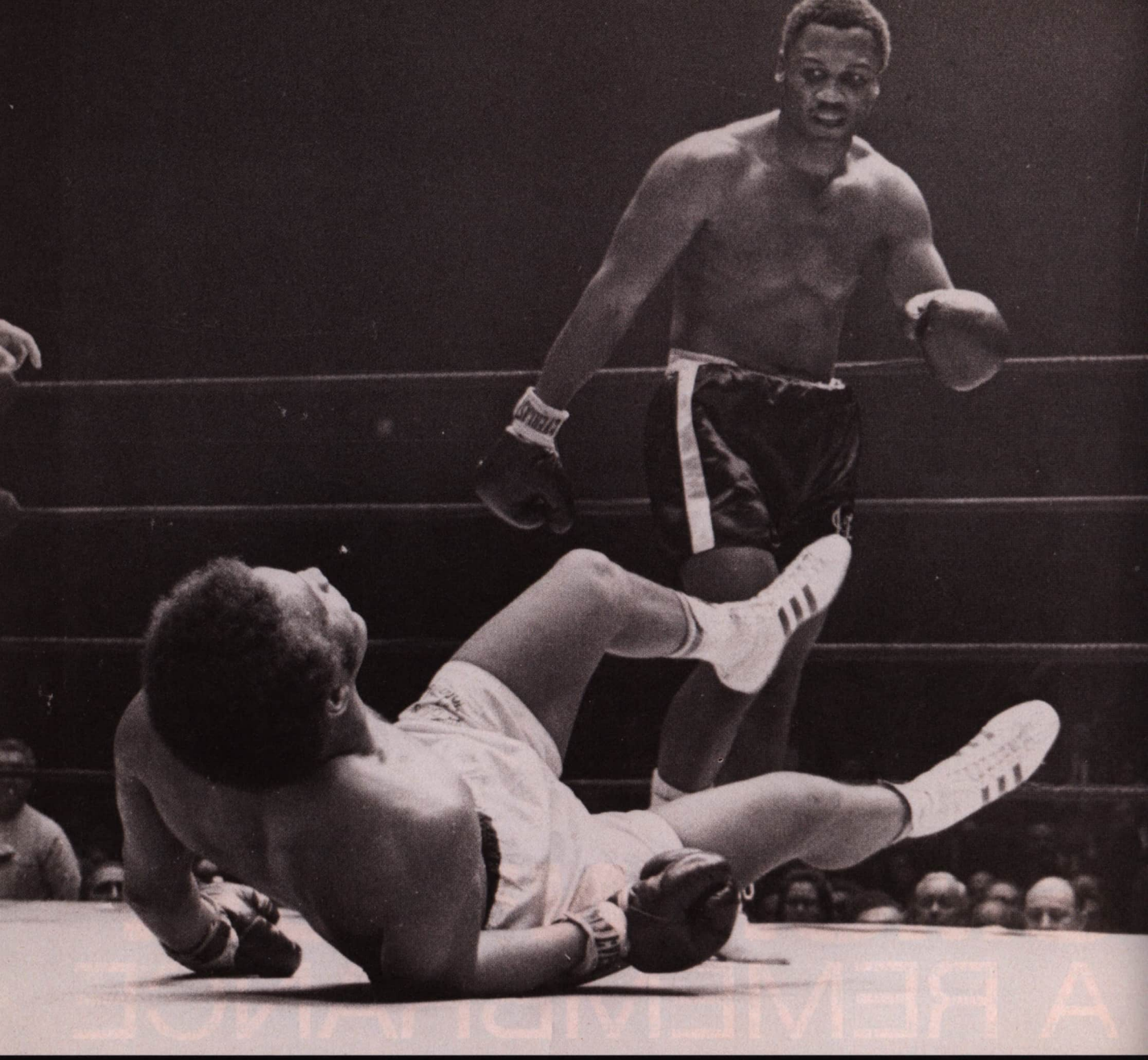
Joe Frazier came home from the 1964 Tokyo Olympics with a gold medal around his neck and his busted thumb in a big plaster cast. He had a wife and four kids. And pretty soon he did not have a job because you cannot push sides of beef around a slaughterhouse with one hand.

Parade? Nobody even mentioned one. Celebration at City Hall? Nope. Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love and skimpy trophy cases, was not into parades back then.

I was doing sports commentary on WCAU radio, working with a disc jockey named Bob Menefee whose motto was "often wrong but never in doubt." I beseeched our listeners to contribute toys so that the Frazier kids could have a decent Christmas.

"Best Christmas the kids ever had," Marvis Frazier remembered recently

I'd been at the *Philadelpia Daily News* since June 1959, so I was there when some prosperous businessmen formed Cloverlay, a syndicate to back



Joe Frazier knocked out Jimmy Ellis to win the heavyweight championship in 1970.

Frazier's pro career. Larry Merchant, sports editor of the *News*, bought a share for $2,500 so he could write about Frazier as his fighter. Sold it years later for $10,000. He should have hung onto it a little longer, because it wound up being worth twice that.

Clover was for luck, and Overlay was for good odds. The backers included a cop named Joe Hand, who went on to establish a booming closed-circuit television business, feeding prime fight telecasts to bars and taverns throughout the Delaware Valley.

"I owe everything I have to Joe," Hand said the day after Frazier passed away. "If not for being involved with him and boxing, I'd be living on a cop's pension with a bungalow in Wildwood."

I was there when Joe fought a journeyman named Woody Goss at Convention Hall in his first fight. And I recall vividly the hyperventilating guy from United Press badgering Frazier, "Who do you want next, Cassius Clay or Jimmy Ellis?"

Yank Durham managed Joe's career warily, skillfully. He shunned the tournament to crown a new champ when Muhammad Ali was exiled for draft evasion. Beat Buster Mathis, beat Jimmy Ellis. Got a fancy title belt to wear.

I wrote a television documentary called "Heavyweight Inc." and we filmed parts of it in Beaufort,

S.C. Found his mom, Dolly, sitting on the front porch of the sharecropper's cabin where Joe was raised, smoking a corn-cob pipe, reminiscing softly about Joe punching a burlap bag, fantasizing about being the heavyweight champeen of the world some day.

I took Joe to see his first Broadway play. Maybe his last. It was "Great White Hope" and he was shocked at the language. Afterwards we went backstage to meet James Earl Jones.

Joe said, "How come you throw the jab like this?" And he mimicked what he'd seen, Jones launching a long, high left jab. Jones laughed, in that deep-throated laugh of his, and explained. "That's for the folks sitting in the balcony, who see it from a different angle."

Frazier saw boxing from a different angle. Regarded it as a job, an improvement over sharecropping, working the fields from sunup 'til sundown. Sure, boxing had its dangers. "You get your brains shook and your money took," Frazier would warn would-be boxers who flocked to his gym. "There are no short cuts."

Which explains why Frazier did his roadwork in combat boots, why he battered his sparring partners. Sure, he beat up his sparring partners and then he'd shoot craps with them and let them win some extra cash, taking even money on a 4 or 10, when he should have been getting 2 to 1.

Merchant left to join the *New York Post* and I was sports editor when Joe fought Ali the first time. We carried a full-page feature story every day for 21 days leading up to the fight. I cringed at Ali's insults, knowing that the fight was sold out in an hour after tickets went on sale, that the fighters were guaranteed $2.5 million apiece and there was no need for Ali to demean Frazier to sell tickets.

It was one of those rare events that exceed the hype. Madison Square Garden reeked of celebrities, Frank Sinatra at ringside taking photos for *Life Magazine*, Burt Lancaster doing the color commentary.

And then the drama of the fight, Frazier throwing that vicious left hook in the last round, knocking Ali on the seat of his pants, the red tassels on his shoes jiggling.

"I brought that from down home," Frazier said afterward. He meant Beaufort. And even then, Philadelphia did not embrace him, because too many people had listened to Ali's nasty rhetoric.

We sold 500,000 papers the next day. Normal circulation was 250,000. No other paper in the world doubled its circulation that day.

Frazier celebrates after he stopped Jimmy Ellis to win the heavyweight championship.

Joe defied Durham's advice and chose to fight George Foreman in Jamaica. Too tall, too strong. Down goes Frazier, down goes Frazier. There were two more fights with Ali, the last one in Manila, where Frazier summoned the skills and the fury of years past.

"Closest thing to death," Ali groaned afterward. It ended sadly, with Eddie Futch pinning Frazier to his stool after the 14th round, fearing lethal damage if he sent Joe out there with one eye closed shut.

Frazier never forgave Ali for those crude insults. He saw Ali's symptoms of Parkinson's as God's punishment for someone who screeched, "I am the greatest."

I have always believed that they brought out the best in each other inside the ring and the worst in each other outside the ring.

Frazier was a terrific fighter, a good man and a good friend. And now, too little, too late, Philadelphia will hopefully find a way to honor him. ■

Stan Hochman was a columnist, beat writer and editor at the *Philadelphia Daily News*. He received the Nat Fleischer Memorial Award from the Boxing Writer's Association of America for excellence in boxing journalism in 1991.

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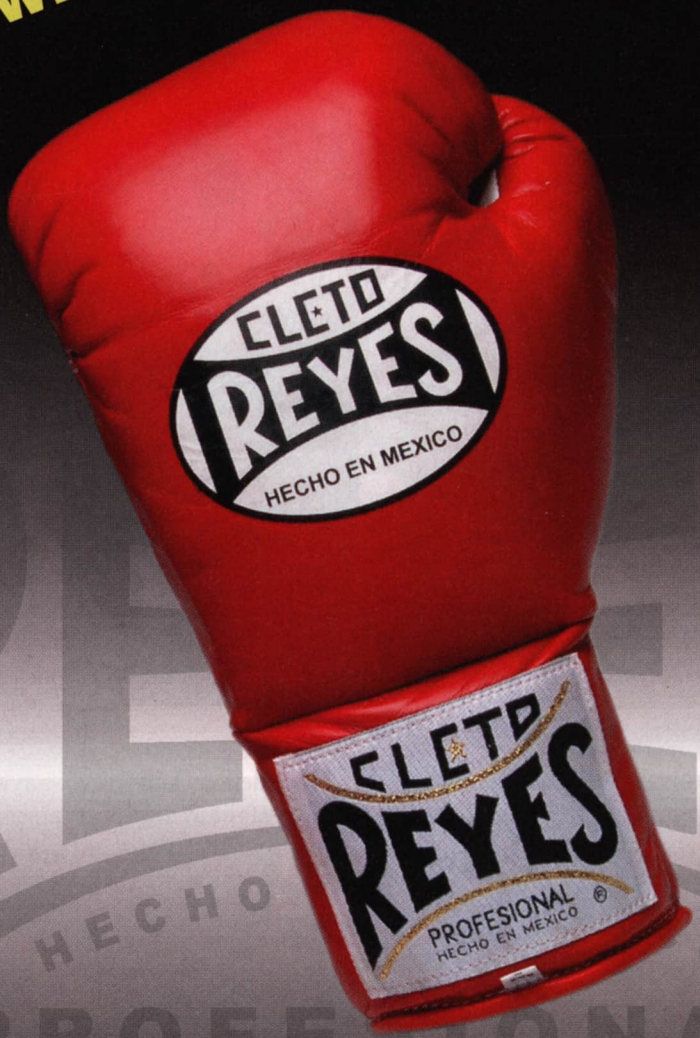

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IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

Referee Russell Mora was lambasted for failing to penalize Abner Mares even though he landed numerous low blows against Joseph Agbeko. Photo by Naoki Fukuda.

OUT OF THE NORM: THE YEAR OF THE (BAD) REF

MISTAKES MADE BY THE THIRD MAN IN THE RING COMMANDED TOO MUCH ATTENTION IN 2011

Words: **Norm Frauenheim**

Year-end awards will include all of the usual arguments, nominees and winners that represent a tale of the tape for 2011. But the historical review is missing a category. It was the year of the referee. That's not necessarily a good thing, especially if an old benchmark is applied to the job.

To wit: More often than not, the third man in the ring can say he had a successful night on the job if nobody notices him. During the last 12 months, however, the refs got plenty of notice, or perhaps notoriety.

Russell Mora, Joe Cortez and Pat Russell were part of the post-fight debate as much as Abner Mares and Joseph Agbeko, Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Victor Ortiz, Bernard Hopkins and Chad Dawson.

The storm of controversies began to swirl around Mora in August when he was criticized for not penalizing Mares for low blows in a majority decision over Agbeko at the Hard Rock Café in Las Vegas. It grew in September at Vegas' MGM Grand with questions about Cortez's role in a fourth-round combination from Mayweather that knocked out Ortiz, whose hands were at his side and his eyes on Cortez instead of the fighter in front of him. It peaked in October when Russell ruled that Dawson won by technical knockout in a second-round takedown that left Hopkins with a shoulder injury at Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Twice might be mere coincidence. Three might be approaching a trend. That, at least, is a concern for Hall of Fame trainer and HBO commentator Emanuel Steward. The public tolerates, even expects, controversial decisions. A noisy debate over the judges and their scorecards is part of the game. But refs are like cops on the beat. Fans expect them to be there quickly with the right ruling most of the time.

So, too, do the fighters.

Mares doesn't deny he landed low blows against Agbeko on Aug. 13. But he says Agbeko would not have been knocked down by one in the 11th round if Mora had been more vigilant in the early going.

"If I had been penalized early in the fight, maybe by a point, I definitely would have stopped going to the body the way I was," Mares said before their

Joe Cortez was criticized after Floyd Mayeather Jr. knocked out Victor Ortiz when neither Ortiz nor Cortez were looking.

bantamweight rematch on Dec. 3 at the Honda Center in Anaheim, Calif.

Steward heard public discontent voiced at recent clinics he conducted in Orlando, Fla., and then Puerto Rico.

"It's a sad state for boxing when the next day, more people are talking about the refereeing than they are talking about a great fight," Steward said. "A major industry is being screwed up with all of these referee calls."

Then Steward got an earful from his daughter, Sylvia, who was fed up with what she saw in Dawson-Hopkins, which many argued should have been ruled as no-contest instead of a TKO.

"She was raised in boxing," Steward said. "She says, 'Daddy, I'm done with pay-per-view boxing. I'm done, I'm just done. I've spent $120 this month. No more.'"

A daughter's frustration is anecdotal yet a powerful confirmation of what Steward has been thinking and hearing. It also represents a good reason for him to argue that it's time to find solutions before there's a growing trend of disaffected fans who agree that they, too, are done with pay-per-view.

"Millions of dollars are on the line," Steward said. "The future of the sport is really in the hands of that referee. He's a powerful person."

A fallible one, too.

"We all make mistakes," said Nevada's Kenny Bayless, who doesn't make many but concedes one in May when he ruled that Shane Mosley knocked down Manny Pacquiao in a one-sided victory for Pacquiao. "I should have ruled it a push."

Mistakes are inevitable, simply because there are always moments when a referee finds himself a step, or half-step, out of place. The wrong angle can lead to a wrong judgment. There's also the totality of the job. A referee might be looking at a dangerous cut above an eye from a possible head butt when a low-blow lands.

"It's not like a football referee in the defensive secondary who throws a flag for interference," Bayless

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

said. "We've got everything."

Everything perhaps, except the technical assets that help NFL refs review calls. The Nevada State Athletic Commission can go to instant replay only to review the ending of a fight that ends prematurely. California, where Hopkins-Dawson took place, doesn't use replay at all.

"It all depends on how it is used," Bayless said. "In Hopkins-Dawson, it could have had an impact in that situation."

Hopkins, whose TKO loss to Dawson was reviewed and called a technical draw by the World Boxing Council, is one fighter who has advocated further use of instant replay. Cortez agrees.

"Yeah, instant replay is good," said Cortez, who was back at work for Mercito Gesta's victory over Ricardo Dominguez on Nov. 11 in Las Vegas for the first time since his mom died not long after Mayweather-Ortiz on Sept. 17. "I don't want to see an athlete deprived of a victory because of a mistake."

In Nevada, instant replay is used when a fight has to be stopped, which usually means cuts from either a punch or a head butt. Instant replay can be decisive in determining what caused the fight-ending wound. If it can be used in other situations, however, it's time to consider the possibilities, Cortez said.

"We need to talk about it," he said. It's definitely something that should be brought up."

In addition to instant replay, Steward advocates continuing education, which would include seminars, clinics and re-reading the rulebook. When confronted by critics of his work in Mayweather-Ortiz, Cortez cites the book. He was ripped for deducting one point instead of two from Ortiz for his head-butt that led up to the controversial finish. Ortiz launched himself, head first, into Mayweather's face.

"Look up 35.1 in the Association of Boxing Commission's rule book," said Cortez, who conducts clinics and works with apprentice referees in a ring set up inside of his Las Vegas home. "It states if a fighter commits an intentional foul, there's a two-point deduction only if there's an injury. After the fight, Mayweather said he got cut on the inside of his lip, but I didn't see it at that time."

A couple of months after Mayweather-Ortiz, Cortez had no regrets about how he handled the welterweight fight. In hindsight, he said he would have kept Mayweather and Ortiz separated by more of a distance while he looked toward the timekeeper to see how many seconds were left in the fourth.

"If I had known that it would have ended, yeah, I would have separated them by more than I did," he said. "What Larry Merchant called a legal cheap-shot is exactly what it was."

In the end, however, both he and his boss, Nevada Commission executive director Keith Kizer, blame Ortiz for not protecting himself.

"Victor is very nice kid, but I did what I had to do," Cortez said. "He created a bad situation for himself, for Mayweather and for me. Too bad. There were no winners that night."

The controversy forced Cortez to change his plans. He says that he wanted to retire after Mayweather-Ortiz. He's 68. He had just been inducted to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, N.Y.

"I didn't want to go out that way," he said. "I want to go out with a big one, a good one."

One without argument. ■

BY DR. MARGARET GOODMAN

Sergio Mora said coping with his draw against Shane Mosley was one of the biggest challenges of his career.

POST-FIGHT BLUES?

BOXERS MUST ACKNOWLEDGE AND DEAL WITH PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ISSUES AFTER THEY FIGHT

Image: **Craig Bennett / Fightwireimages**

We typically blame poor eating habits and lack of self discipline when a boxer's life spins out of control after a fight. This "crash" may result from the physical and emotional pain experienced after the weeks or months of preparation are suddenly over. Physical injuries can make it worse. And too often the mental aspects are ignored.

In a 2005 article titled "Elite Athletes and Treating Post-Competition Depression" sports psychologist Dr. Ronda Wimmer wrote, "When an athlete is finished with the peak competitive season (especially true for retiring athletes), social demands and personal relationships change. ... An athlete maintains a certain schedule for years with intense drive and desire. All of sudden the schedule changes, and the need for the intense drive and desire is no longer necessary. The athlete is left with feelings of loss and loss of purpose, and often asks himself or herself, silently, 'Now what do I do.'"

Former junior middleweight titleholder Raul Marquez retired three times during his career. Marquez, now a respected television commentator, believes a boxer's well-being after a fight depends on what happened in the ring.

"In 1997, I was cut up bad after winning the (Keith) Mullings fight and received 77 stitches," he said. "I came back too soon against Ramon (Yory Boy) Campos. He was a bomber. My face was really beat up. The fight was stopped in the eighth round. I returned to my home in Houston and held up for three weeks. I was depressed. My wife would cry with me. But the money was good, and I was promised a fight with De La Hoya the following year. My dad knew and even wanted to cancel, but I was young and cocky."

Sergio Mora, a former middleweight titleholder, says the only time he was physically hurt after a fight was when he fought Ishe Smith in 2004. However, his greatest letdowns in his career were his draws against Shane Mosley and Elvin Ayala.

"It was depressing," he said. "I trained so hard for those fights and I got nothing out of it. Those fights had the greatest psychological impact on me. I numbed it with alcohol. I would go out to forget."

The post-fight blues can include fatigue, mood swings, insomnia, slowing of thought processes, diet changes (overeating or decreased appetite), poor memory, anxiety and even thoughts of suicide. There also can be loss of sex drive or feelings of anger.

When asked how he got beyond this, Mora said, "You have to accept that you met someone as good as you and throw all the excuses out the window. Even legends have a draw. It's just something that happens." Boxers are the toughest of all athletes, which might be why few are willing to discuss and seek help for post-fight blues and injuries. But there are many ways a fighter can combat such problems:

1. Understand that rest and time away from physical punishment is crucial.
2. A few weeks before a fight, the boxer should set post-fight goals and plan to do something enjoyable.
3. Maintain a routine. Suddenly eating whatever you like and not going to the gym can mess with your mind when you are accustomed to the discipline of training camp.
4. Ask family and close friends to check in on you after the bout. People are always around when you win, but their presence is more important after a loss.
5. Treat yourself with non-food items and avoid alcohol/drugs that will only increase isolation, depression and poor health.
6. Come to terms with your performance. It's OK to get angry, cry and admit frustration. Disappointment with your performance will fade more slowly if you ignore it.
7. Examine your performance with an objective and critical eye. Figure out what worked and what didn't.
8. Returning to the fundamentals with a positive focus on technique is productive and confidence-building.

"I have had the support of my family," Marquez said. "My dad and brother were always part of my corner. But at the end of the day, you have to go through this by yourself."

When asked how he was able to retire at 37, Marquez recounted an untold story about his last fight against Arthur Abraham in 2008.

"I traveled to Germany. The day of the fight, it was postponed because Abraham had the flu. It wasn't the same in camp. You get bored. I saw a story on television about Gerald McClellan. It was so sad," said Marquez, referring to McClellan's 1995 fight against Nigel Benn in which he suffered a severe brain bleed. He has been severely disabled and confined to a wheelchair ever since.

"For whatever reason that video stuck with me," Marquez continued. "Abraham has power. Every time he hit me, I thought about my kids. My dad made the right call and stopped the fight in the sixth round. I didn't fight the stoppage. After that, I was happy. We lost, but I had a great career. I even warned Jermaine Taylor before he fought Abraham."

Mora said a fighter must listen to himself.

"Motivation – both mentally and spiritually – is involved," he said. "When you return to that ring and the bell rings, you have to have the hunger and motivation to win. I know when I have it, and it makes me a better fighter."

And motivation comes in part with a better understanding of post-fight blues and the need for rest. ■

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"Boxers must be part of the equation."
— José Chegüi Torres

FULL HOUSE

CAN A BOXING GYM **INSPIRE GREATNESS?** THE WILD CARD BOXING CLUB IN PHOTOS

Images: **Robert Gallagher** / Words: **Gary Andrew Poole**

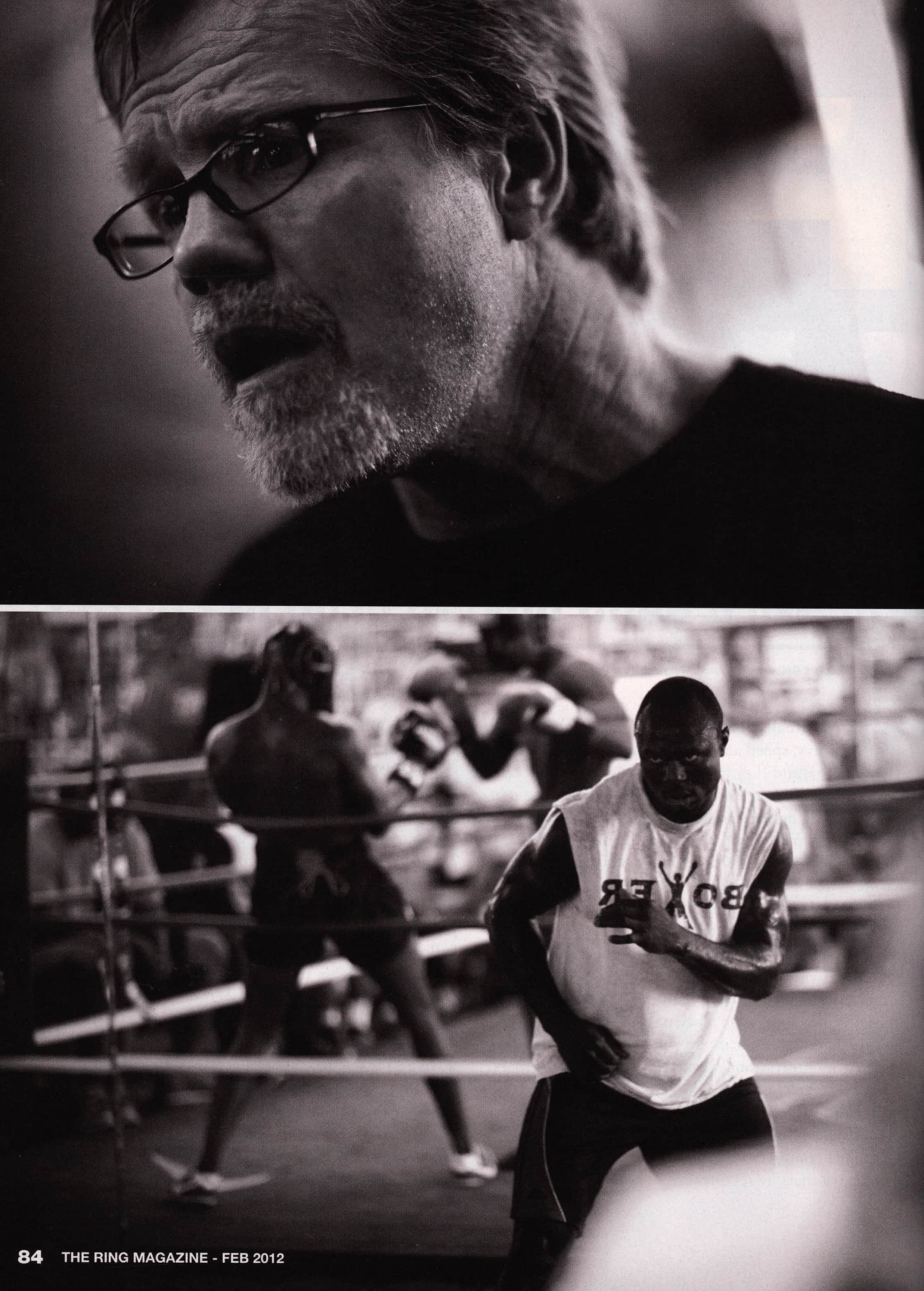
Most (real) boxing gyms are equipped with heavy, speed and double-end bags, a mirror or two, and they are pungent with sweat.

But how does a boxing gym become an icon in itself, making fighters come halfway around the world just to soak up the atmosphere? There have been many legendary gyms, such as the 5th St. Gym, Gleason's and Kronk. The modern boxing era has been defined by the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood, Calif.

I remember going into the gym several years ago and asking Freddie Roach – the five-time trainer of the year and owner – why he started the place. Roach told me that he didn't make any money from the gym itself, but he wanted a regular place to train his fighters. And he also wanted to create an old-style boxing gym, in which top professionals trained alongside amateurs, because he felt as if boxing gyms were becoming a lost tradition. He hoped that one day world-champion fighters as well as unknowns would come to the Wild Card, feel comfortable and want to train there. Iconic gyms have their own culture, and Roach has created a pugilistic ambience that attracts some of the greatest fighters of this era.

In 2001, when Manny Pacquiao entered the gym as a complete unknown ("I had no idea who he was," says Roach) to hopefully work the mitts with Roach, he felt a connection to the place, and he has never left.

Just a couple months ago, I was in the Wild Card, which is in a rundown strip mall, and in the span of three minutes, I saw Julio Caesar Chavez Jr., who had just finished his workout; Manny Pacquiao, who said hello, giggled and then went into the cramped locker room to wrap his own hands; and Amir Khan, who was at the gym's front desk getting ready for Roach to wrap his hands. It is not atypical to see world class fighters, U.S. Olympic team members (Roach is an advisor for the U.S. Olympic team), as well as up-and-comers, celebrities and just regular folks trying to learn the sweet science. There are usually film crews shooting fighters for sports broadcasts, and HBO has been creating a reality show, *On Freddie Roach*, coming out in early 2012.



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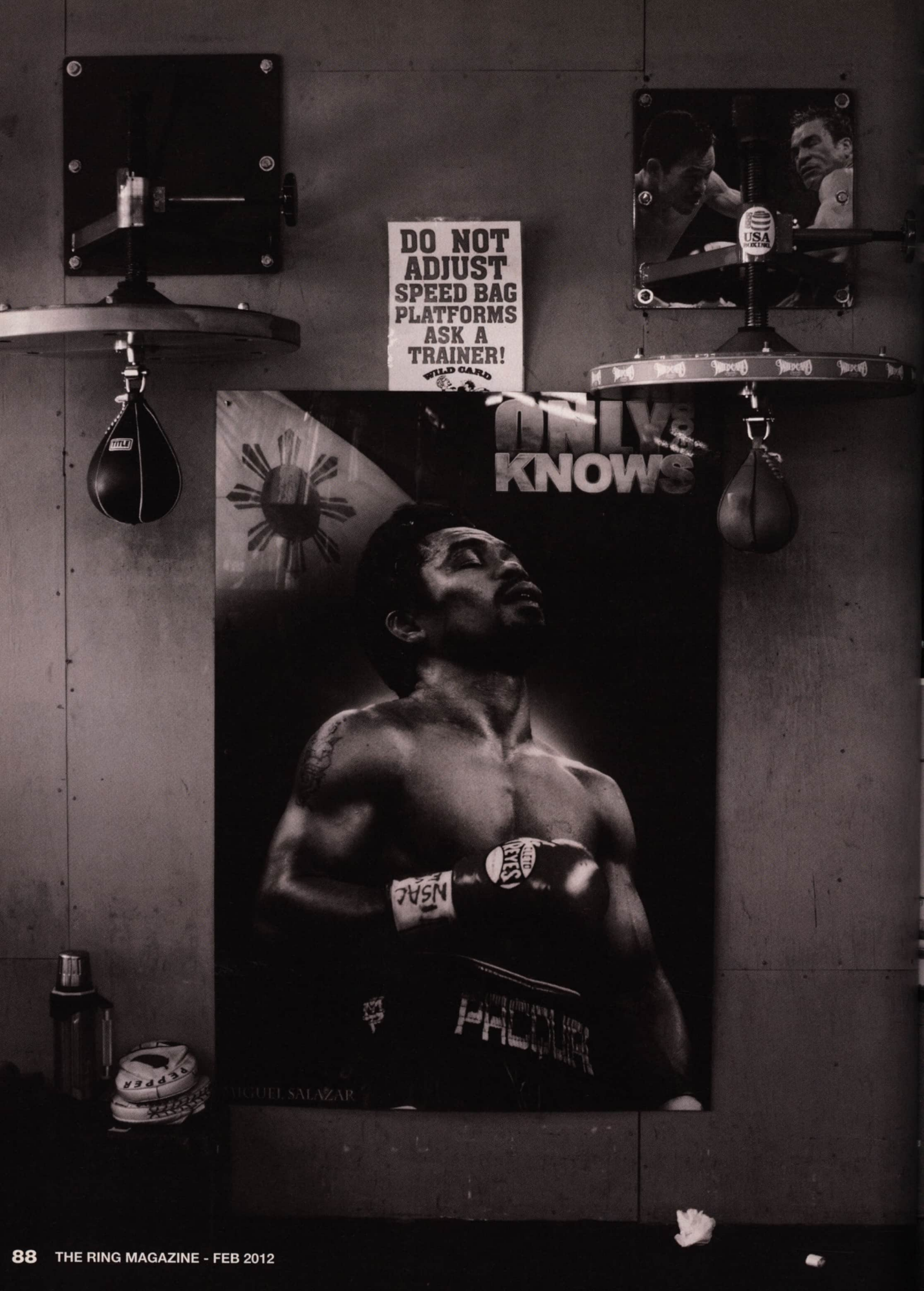
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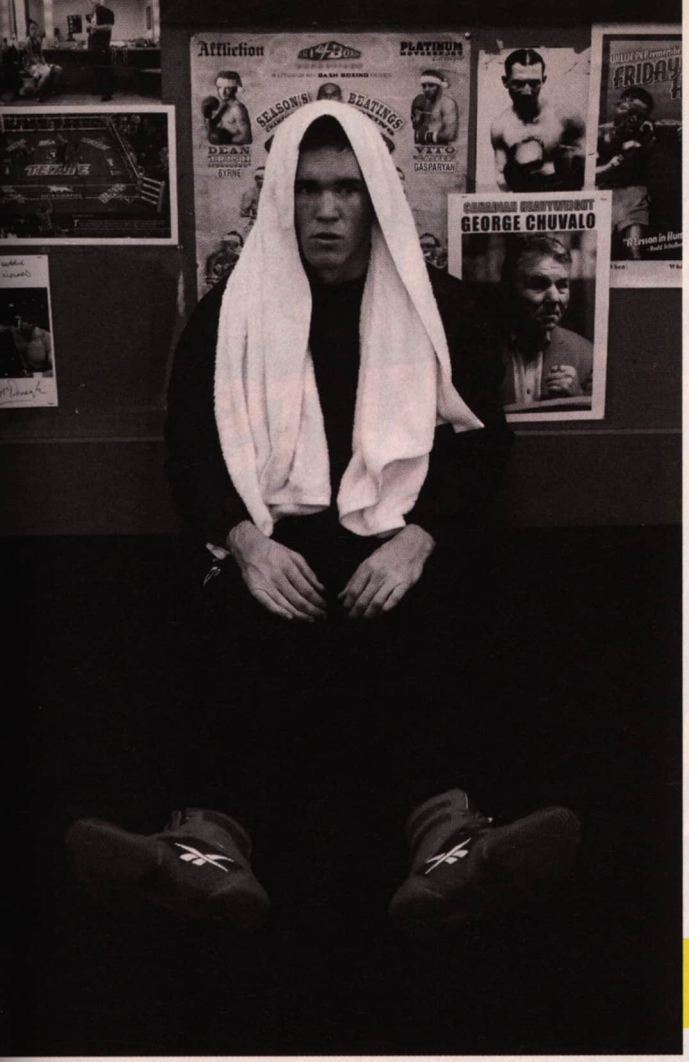
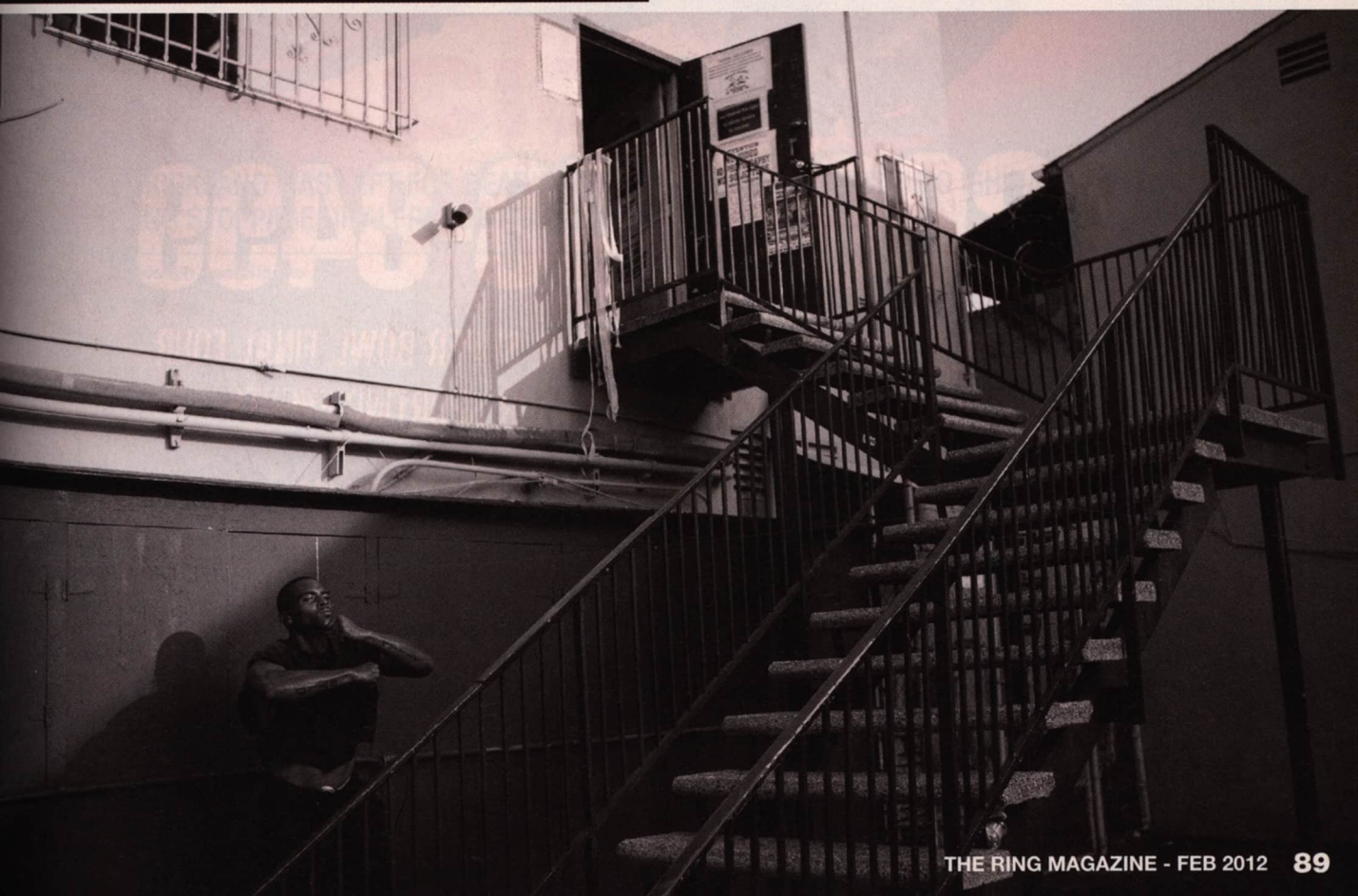


As Khan told me, "You have the best fighters and the best sparring partners in this gym, so when you train here there is a good atmosphere and energy. I couldn't train like this in England. Same with Manny in the Philippines. This is a professional gym, and we are left alone to work."

In Roach's Wild Card Boxing Club there is a paradox: It is authentic, it embraces many different characters and it is packed with talent ("You never know when the next world champion is going to walk in the gym," says Roach, who has trained 31 world champions) but it is also a pugilistic academy for all walks of people. Like a tenured professor, Roach moves through his gym and people keep an eye on him, listen to his brilliant boxing advice and seem energized by his presence. ("The one thing about all of my guys – the work ethic is unbelievable," says Roach.)

Roach, as most boxing people know, has Parkinson's disease. He has tremors and a drop foot. But when he is in the ring working the mitts the tremors disappear, and the people in the place see it, and take it in. Roach works hard and without complaint. And that spirit of sacrifice seems to inspire the people within the place to overcome their own obstacles, to achieve their own greatness. ■

Gary Andrew Poole writes for *TIME* and *The Atlantic*. He is the author of *PacMan: Behind the Scenes with Manny Pacquiao (Da Capo)*, which *The Guardian* named one of the best books of 2010. The biography is now available in paperback.



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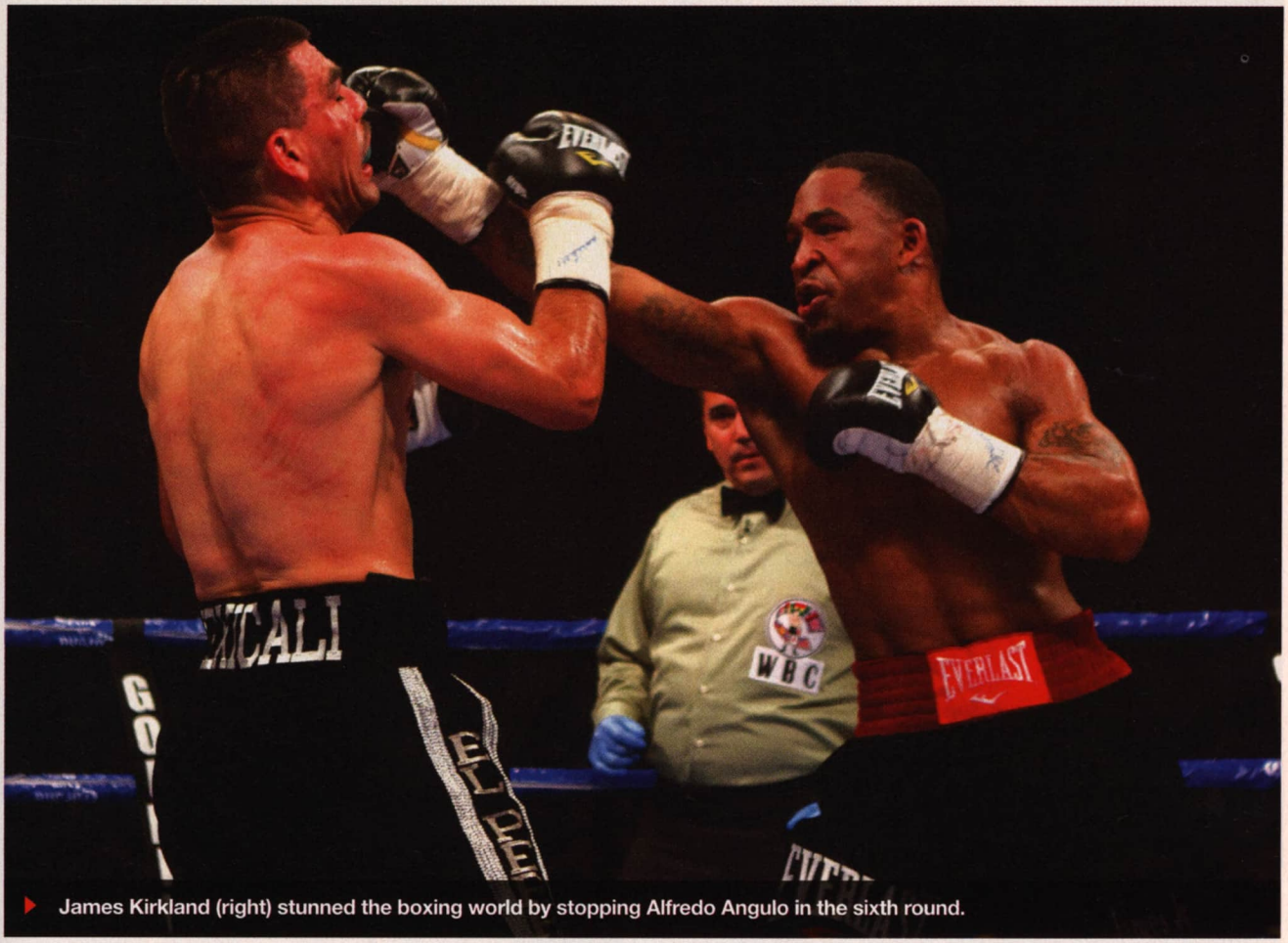

IMAGE: ROBERTO FERNANDEZ / HOGANPHOTOS

James Kirkland (right) stunned the boxing world by stopping Alfredo Angulo in the sixth round.

SHOCK AND AWE

JAMES KIRKLAND WAS LEFT FOR DEAD AFTER HIS KO LOSS TO NOBUHIRO ISHIDA BUT PROVED WITH A STUNNING STOPPAGE OF ALFREDO ANGULO THAT HE'S ALIVE AND HELL

Words: **Joseph Santoliquito**

James Kirkland was going to Cancun, Mexico, to lose. It was part of the unwritten script, that his role was "the opponent" without anyone actually saying it out loud. To Kirkland's face, he'd get the line about how he had "a shot" at beating the hometown fighter – in this case, hard-punching Alfredo Angulo. But in reality, the encouraging faces in front of him were often the same ones whispering behind his back that he didn't have a prayer.

Kirkland knew it. His trainer, Ann Wolfe, knew it. The fans flocking into Centro de Cancun thought they knew it. Kirkland vs. Angulo promised to be a war – and James Kirkland wasn't supposed to win.

There was just one glaring issue: Kirkland wasn't about to play along with the script. He hadn't rearranged his life to lose. Such as waking up early each morning to iron his children's school clothes so he could get out and run. He'd never ironed a thing before in his life.

He wasn't about to let the doubters get into his head and steal his chance to jump back into the junior middleweight picture. There was no way each aching hour he spent behind bars thinking, breathing, dreaming about this moment would be in vain. No way Kirkland was going to relive the terrible first-round knockout loss he suffered just seven months prior to journeyman Nobuhiro Ishida. No way was Kirkland going to experience such a thing again.

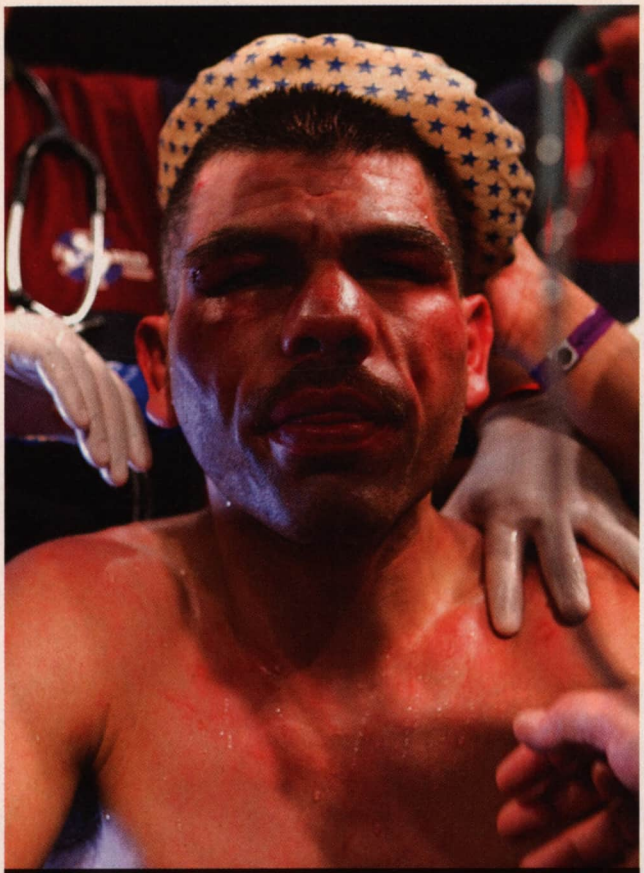

IMAGE: ROBERTO FERNANDEZ / HOGANPHOTOS

Alfredo Angulo's battered face tells the story of a difficult night.

James Kirkland is fully aware that he accomplished something special on Nov. 5 in Mexico.

What Kirkland ultimately did to Angulo in early November, stopping him in the sixth round of their Fight of the Year candidate, not only thrust "The Mandingo Warrior" back into the 154-pound picture, it put him on a path to lucrative possibilities, most notably a potential showdown with Mexican star Saul "Canelo" Alvarez.

"I knew if I lost, that was it, I was done," said Kirkland, 30-1 (27 knockouts). "I also knew the attitude people had toward me. I knew I was supposed to lose. I feel like a lot of people gave up on me. They were feeding me to the dogs with Angulo. He was supposed to get the Alvarez fight after beating me. That was the plan. Anyone who knows boxing knows that was the plan. I saw the picture and understood that. About the only ones who thought I could win was myself, Ann, Pops [Billingsley] and my co-managers, Cameron Dunkin and Michael Miller."

Not that everything came easily once the bell rang. It did get a little scary there for Kirkland at the outset; he was against the ropes, when Angulo, 22-2 (17 KOs), hurled a taser right hand that caught Kirkland's chin 28 seconds into the bout, dropping him instantly in what appeared to be a repeat of the Ishida fight. Before

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James Kirkland suddenly has a bright future again after he stopped Alfredo Angulo.

that happened, however, there was a telling sign of things to come: Kirkland, who had gotten up quickly, was attacking Angulo and actually backing him up – a rare sight in any Angulo fight.

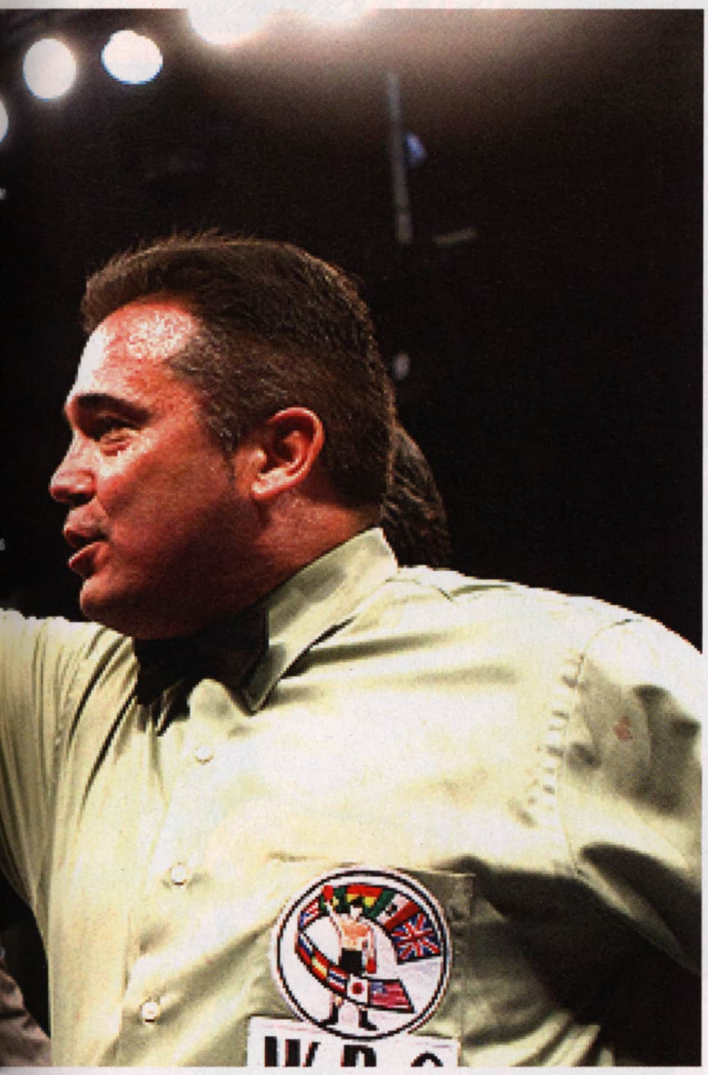
By the end of the initial stanza – a Round of the Year candidate – Kirkland, to the surprise of many, dropped Angulo against the ropes after a barrage of punches.

"The difference from the Ishida fight and the Angulo fight is I was trying to train with someone different, with different training methods and different strategy when I was working with Kenny Adams," Kirkland said. "Everything was way off balance. My movement was off. I was taking shots, and those crazy early moments against Ishida left me out there out of position to make moves and punches. That all changed when I went back with Ann. She's the one I have to give a lot of credit to. You saw two people in my corner, Ann and Pops."

Wolfe was indeed one of very few who stuck by Kirkland, even after the Ishida fight, and the impact of her presence was obvious. Kirkland's punching was sharp and accurate. He admits he could have used a little head movement, and that Angulo hurt him a few times to the body. But Kirkland used his jab, which caused swelling on Angulo's face by the third round. Referee Johnny Callas was watching the fighters closely by the sixth. After another brazen Kirkland attack, a limp Angulo sagged slightly against the ropes, a signal for Callas to step in and wave the fight off at the 1:58 mark.

Kirkland has made some marked improvements under Wolfe's guidance outside the ring as well. He has accepted direction. He's more of a homebody now, much more involved with his children than he has ever been.

"James is a different person with Ann," said Dunkin, who signed Kirkland 11 fights into his pro career. "Ann is the one person who can reach him. We found that out after they parted for a time. They got into a fight, James left. We felt James had to get out of Austin. There were some bad influences there and no one watching him in Austin. So we had to find a place and a trainer to work with him. In the end, there was



nothing wrong with the decision to use Kenny Adams. I knew I could have taken James to any great trainer and the same thing would have happened. Without Ann Wolfe, there is no James Kirkland. You cannot remove Ann. We all understand that now."

Wolfe watched the Ishida fight on TV. She could see immediately that Kirkland wasn't right by the look in his eyes. It didn't last long. Ishida, a lanky journeyman who hadn't stopped an opponent in three years, was suddenly getting the better of Kirkland, bouncing the rough Texan off the canvas like a basketball three times. Kirkland finally wilted and referee Joe Cortez mercifully stopped the fight.

Wolfe didn't raise her voice. She didn't clench her fist. She didn't throw anything at the TV. All she could do was slowly drop her head. Even though they had parted, it hurt her to see her former fighter down like that, and it bothered her even more the way Cortez, she felt, held him down.

Kirkland admits now that he didn't train, didn't feel right heading into the fight and told anyone willing to listen that he wasn't going to be at his best. It wasn't long after the defeat that he returned to Wolfe's boxing lair. It's a tiny makeshift place where Wolfe is queen and taskmaster. She, along with Kirkland's management team, steadily built him back with a few soft fights spaced about a month apart. Kirkland made easy work of Dennis Sharpe and Alexis Hloros, needing a combined three rounds to dispose of them.

When the Angulo opportunity arose, the Kirkland team jumped at it, though there was some trepidation. Dunkin and Wolfe wanted their fighter to be treated fairly, with concerns about the gloves, ringside doctors and judges coming under scrutiny. Team Kirkland knew what the fight looked like – stacked in Angulo's favor, on the idea that an entertaining victory over Kirkland would grease the skids for an All-Mexican Angulo-Alvarez showdown.

"We knew what was going on, they sent us down there to get our ass whipped," Wolfe said. "I know it. A snowman had a better chance of fighting the devil in Hell than we did of winning that fight. Everything started to get funny, from the gloves being used, to the promotion, with the dogs and everything around. They slept on James. They didn't think he could do this, the promoters, the TV people; no one thought James would win. But I did. James came in prepared. He came ready."

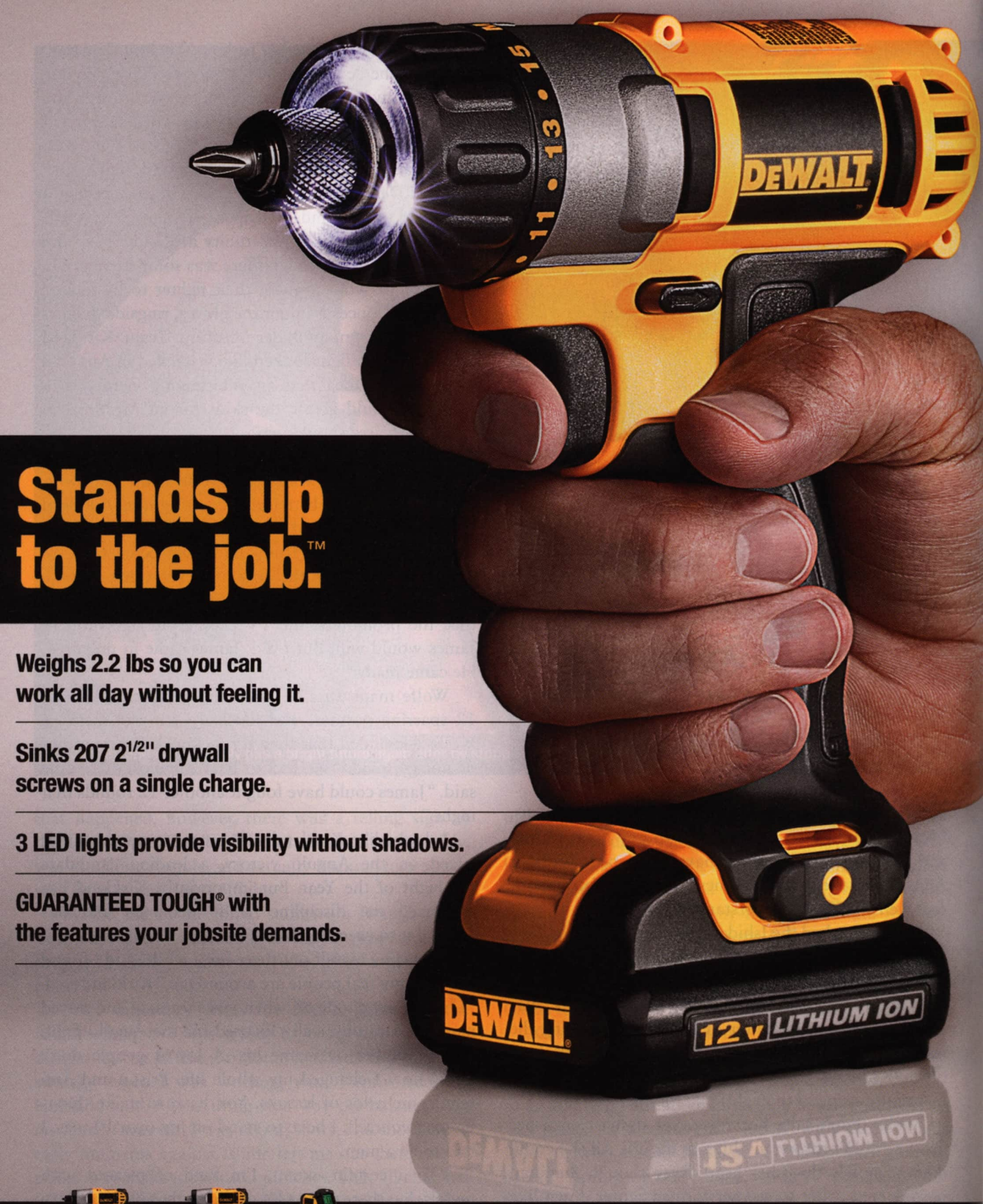
Wolfe made sure he was. The camp started with 12 sparring partners and finished with two, because Wolfe demanded that they try to knock Kirkland out or not get paid. "We had to beat Angulo down," she said. "James could have fought another 12 rounds that night."

It looks like Kirkland will get more opportunities based on the Angulo victory, a leading candidate for Fight of the Year. But importantly, Kirkland has embraced the discipline Wolfe demands and has applied it to everyday life.

"I was by myself out there for a while, and I found out who my real people are around me," Kirkland said. "I turned my phone off when I was training and stayed mentally and physically focused for the Angulo fight. My willpower overcame his. A lot of people don't know how I changed my whole life. Prison and Ann taught me a lot of lessons. You have to make things happen yourself. I have to stand on my own 10 toes. I had to be a man.

"To a certain extent, I'm kind of pleased with myself, but there were a lot of things that I had to learn to get here. A lot of stuff is behind me; I learned when I do something, I put my all into it."

No one will doubt that again. ■



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Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez are about as evenly matched as two fighters can be.

IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

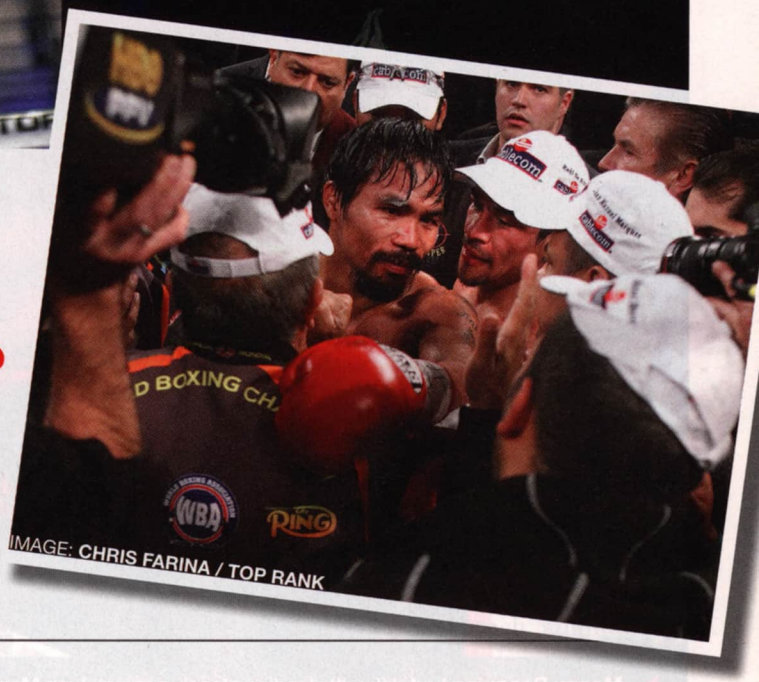


IMAGE: CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK

WHAT NOW FOR PACQUIAO?

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ EARNED A FOURTH SHOT AT MANNY PACQUIAO WITH A STRONG PERFORMANCE, BUT THE EVER-PRESENT SPECTER OF A MAYWEATHER FIGHT REMAINS TANTALIZING

Words: **Ron Borges**

LAS VEGAS – Juan Manuel Marquez may never win a decision from Manny Pacquiao, but on Nov. 12 he appeared to at least defeat the idea that Pacquiao's next opponent would be Floyd Mayweather Jr. That may be a Pyrrhic victory to some, but if true it might be Pacquiao who stands to lose the most.

For the third straight time a confrontation between Marquez and Pacquiao ended in a controversial decision, this time a majority nod in favor of Pacquiao that led a sold-out crowd of 16,368 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena to boo the most popular fighter in boxing all the way back to the silence of his locker room. His promoter, meanwhile, immediately dismissed the thought of re-opening negotiations for the biggest fight in boxing after having endured a dangerous stroll from the arena to the post-fight press conference.

"All the Mexicans are booing me, yelling at me, 'You stole the fight! You stole the fight,' as if I had something to do with it," Bob Arum said. "They wanted to lynch me. You can laugh but I got to go back to Mexico and promote fights.

"Look, not only was this fight not definitive, very few rounds were definitive. If the fighters are willing, we'll do it again."

Several days later, long after Dave Moretti judged Pacquiao a 115-113 winner, Robert Hoyle had it a 114-

Manny Pacquiao had difficultly landing cleanly against Juan Manuel Marquez.

IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

114 draw and Glenn Trowbridge scored it 116-112 for the WBO welterweight champion — apparently seeing a fight no one else in the arena, including associates of Pacquiao, saw — Arum refused to talk with Mayweather's representatives about a May showdown between two guys who have been chasing each other for two years, but with little enthusiasm.

Immediately after the fight, Marquez had raised his own hand, declaring himself the winner for the third time against Pacquiao despite the fact he's come away with a draw, a majority-decision loss and a split-decision loss, and spoke of retirement rather than a fourth fight with his nemesis. Arum immediately dismissed that and suggested the best idea was to do it again next May or June, and even Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach seconded that opinion, despite conceding Pacquiao will always struggle against Marquez.

"They know each other so well," Roach said. "Manny was being careful, cautious. He knew when he lands punches Marquez rallies right back. S--t, he's given us problems three times but I do think he deserves a rematch."

In the days that followed, Arum remained unswayed by talk of making a Mayweather fight, even after Oscar De La Hoya, whose promotional company represents Mayweather in negotiations, accused him of standing in the way of the fight, claiming his company had been notified by retired Federal judge Daniel Weinstein (who has mediated disagreements between the two sides in the past) that Arum would not pursue a May fight with Mayweather.

"There's no doubt Floyd wants Pacquiao," De La Hoya insisted. "Bob Arum doesn't want to see the fight happen."

Because of the closeness of Pacquiao's victory and the fact it was even more hotly disputed by boxing fans and ringside observers than their first two meetings, what the boxing world wants may be incidental unless Pacquiao steps forward and demands Arum make a deal with Mayweather. The fact is, that's not going to happen.

"I'll visit Manny in the Philippines after Christmas and we'll decide," Arum said a week after the Marquez fight. "Obviously a fourth fight with Marquez is an option so I'm not going to sit down with Mayweather's people and start to negotiate a May fight that may not happen.

"What's the point? They've been avoiding the fight for a year and a half and now we gotta sit down with them and talk right now? No we don't."

And they won't in large part because Marquez may have done Pacquiao a favor in an odd way by not only seeming to get the best of him again in the opinion of most fair-minded observers, but also by helping him pack the MGM Grand with a near-record gate of $11.7 million plus a pay-per-view number that was expected to exceed a million buys.

He did it by fighting the opposite of the way Roach anticipated, sticking adroitly to the counter-punching style that has long had him listed among the world's top pound-for-pound fighters. Repeatedly he stopped Pacquiao's forward motion with his jab or laid back and waited to land solid counter right hands whenever Pacquiao closed the distance enough to throw.

"He's always backing off wanting for me to create action and then counter," lamented Pacquiao. "It's not easy to create action when he's waiting for a good shot. It's not that easy to fight Marquez. He's a very good counter-puncher."

So good that the crowd lustily booed when Pacquiao briefly rode on the shoulders of one of his cornermen before the decision was announced as Roach waited nervously in the corner.

"I didn't know who won," Roach admitted. "I thought Manny pulled it out in the last few rounds. It was a competitive fight. It could have gone either way. I was very surprised. I predicted it wouldn't go six rounds. I couldn't have been more wrong.

"It's the kind of fight you don't want to do again but we have to. This one might have been the closest (of their three meetings). If we didn't win the last round, it might have been a draw or gone the other way."

Two of the three judges gave Pacquiao the final round, so had those been reversed, the fight would have been the second draw between them, one judge having it 115-113 Pacquiao, a second 115-113 the other way and the third a draw. Because of the tightness of all three fights and the public outcry immediately after this bout – when the boos grew so loud after the decision

Manny Pacquiao found the mark enough to win a controversial decision over Juan Manuel Marquez.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

was announced that HBO's Max Kellerman had to cut off his post-fight interview in the ring with Pacquiao because no one could hear him – Arum sees a logical business decision to make for several reasons and it doesn't involve Mayweather.

First, if they are going to do a fourth fight with Marquez, there is little reason to wait. Marquez talked of retirement immediately after the fight. But by the time all the pay-per-view money is counted, he will have about 9 million reasons to agree to a rematch of a rematch of a rematch and Pacquiao will understand Arum's reasoning for choosing to delay further the potential highest grossing fight in boxing history – Pacquiao-Mayweather I.

"One thing that concerns me is if we book a Mayweather fight for the spring, what guarantee have we got that he'll be around?" asked Arum, alluding to Mayweather's ongoing legal issues involving a domestic violence case that could land him in jail. "The fight will still be there in November and maybe Floyd will be too. At least by then we'll know.

"The safer course is a fourth fight with Marquez in May or June. True, the money would be bigger for Mayweather but the money is more sure fighting Marquez first. It did really well. We sold 12,000 closed-circuit seats just along the Strip (in Vegas). I have no idea how it would do financially but I can't imagine it will do less business. I can't imagine it would do much more either. I've done a lot of trilogies but I've never done a fourth fight. It would be like the old days."

That, of course, has to be Pacquiao's concern. His third meeting with Marquez (53-6-1, 39 knockouts) bore the same difficult pattern as the first two. Marquez fought mostly backing up but was seldom retreating. Instead he was laying traps for Pacquiao (54-3-2, 38 KOs), countering him beautifully and knocking him off his rhythm.

Later Pacquiao would uncharacteristically use an excuse to explain some of his lack of success, claiming a foot cramp limited his quickness and mobility. Perhaps so, but it was Marquez's quickness and ability to anticipate what was coming and have an answer for it that was his real problem.

"Manny kept moving into the right hand," Roach explained. "He had cramps in his arches and he couldn't get out of the way and got hit on the return too much. Manny was moving to his left too much right into Marquez's right hand. We worked on that but he fell right into that old trap of the first two fights.

"Marquez did have success with the right hand. He has difficulties with counter-punchers. We need to get to work on how to deal with counter-punchers. I got to do my job a little better."

Although Pacquiao began to come on late in the fight, he never seemed comfortable and often appeared hesitant and at times even daunted. As in the previous two fights, he got hit with the straight right hands that are the bane of a left-handed fighter's existence and ended up with a deep gash over his right eye from an accidental clash of heads in the 10th round, resulting in 28 stitches.

That cut only added to Pacquiao's many difficulties so for him a return to "the old days" as it relates to Marquez may not be high on his to-do list. Pacquiao had repeatedly insisted before the fight that he was going to finally end all doubt about who was the superior man and the betting lines reflected that.

Fighting at a weight 14 pounds heavier than the last time they met three years ago, the belief was Marquez would this time prove to be too small for Pacquiao. Coincidentally, the proof of that was supposed to be the lopsided way Mayweather schooled him a year ago in his only other welterweight fight. That night Marquez looked sluggish, an undersized guy who had wandered too far afield from his natural weight, which is really still 130-135 pounds.

Because of that, Pacquiao was a 10-1 favorite in the Vegas sports books but he was life and death in the ring at the MGM. It was a familiar story between the two of them even to the end. Perhaps that is why Marquez seemed less surprised and outraged after the fight.

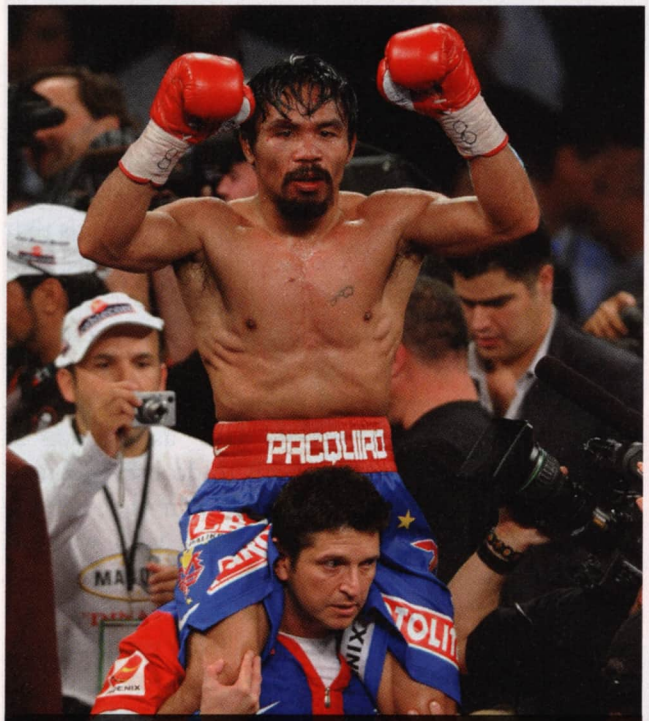
He was disgusted to be sure, but seemed this time almost resigned to the fact he is never going to get a fair shake against Pacquiao in Las Vegas.

"Everybody knows what happened," Marquez said at the post-fight press conference. "What do I need to do for the judges to give me the fight? I won this fight, more clearly than the other two.

"I'm frustrated right now," Marquez admitted. "Very frustrated. Honestly, I don't know what I have to do to change the mind of the judges. I don't know what happened. What do I need to do? The best judge, for me, is the audience and they responded sensationally for me.

"It is the result of this fight that makes me think of retirement. I want the judges to score the fight the way it is happening. Everybody knows what happened. I think I won this fight more clearly. I really believe I need to drop him and they'd put him back up and give him the fight.

"This was the second robbery and this one was worse than the first. It's hard when you're fighting your rival and the three judges, too." ■



Manny Pacquiao doesn't appear to be any more convinced he beat Juan Manuel Marquez than anyone else.

THE JUDGES GOT PACQUIAO-MARQUEZ **WRONG**

Words: **Chuck Giampa** / Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

As the scores were announced after Manny Pacquiao-Juan Miguel Marquez III, the majority of fans watching the fight live at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas and on pay-per-view TV were shocked to put it mildly. Judge Robert Hoyle scored it 114-114; judge Dave Moretti scored it 115-113 for Pacquiao and judge Glenn Trowbrodge had the unbelievable score of 116-112 for Pacquiao. My score card read 116-112 for Marquez.

In a previous article, my subject was, "How Can Judges Score the Same Fight So Differently." One of the reasons I cited was the different philosophies of the judges. The Pacquiao-Marquez fight proved this point.

Here's where I believe the judges went wrong:

Effective aggression – not aggression only – is the most-important factor in winning a round. The fighter who lands the cleaner punches – based on number, accuracy and power – should win the round. Ring generalship should be a factor only if neither fighter has an advantage as a result of effective aggression. In that case, the fighter who controls the action with his or her boxing skills should win the round. Then, if doubt still remains, the round should be scored in favor of the aggressor, the fighter who forces the action.

Marquez controlled the majority of rounds with effective aggression AND ring generalship.

Harold Lederman, the unofficial judge for HBO, gave Pacquiao more credit than he deserved based on Lederman's comments that Pacquiao was more aggressive, which he apparently equated with ring generalship. Effective aggression is different from just aggression. And aggression does necessarily equate to ring generalship. I believe Lederman and the three judges did not give Marquez enough credit for his effective counter punching. As per the rules, a fighter should be given credit for effective aggression whether moving forward, backward, sideways against the ropes or counter punching.

Pacquiao performed admirably in the fights since he last fought Marquez, which might linger in the minds of judges. A judge must clear his mind completely prior to every fight; he should enter the fight with no preconceptions (consciously or unconsciously) or expectations as to how the fighters will perform or their last performances.

Again, judging in professional boxing is not based on the number of punches thrown but by the effectiveness of the punches landed. This is not properly recorded in the CompuBox punch stats, although they do include power punches. Judging in amateur boxing is based on the number of punches landed with no regard to their effectiveness; but this was not an amateur fight. It was a professional championship fight and should have been scored as such.

There also is a philosophy in boxing that ideal scoring in a 12-round fight has the three judges agreeing on at least nine of the 12 rounds. The three judges in this fight agreed on only six of the 12 rounds, which says to me that they came in with vastly different philosophies. Interestingly, Trowbridge scored the last round for Marquez while the other two judges scored it for Pacquiao. If Trowbridge had agreed with the other two judges in Round 12, he would have had a ridiculous final score of 117-111 for Pacquiao.

The overwhelming majority of those who contacted me regarding the decision had Marquez winning the fight. Unfortunately the judges were in the minority.

You can reach Chuck Giampa at chuckgiampa@aol.com

COMPILED BY **MIKE COPPINGER**

IMAGE: TOM CASINO / SHOWTIME

Lucian Bute (right) easily passed the stiffest test of his career when he outpointed Glen Johnson.

LUCIAN BUTE UD 12
GLEN JOHNSON

On the sidelines during Showtime's Super Six World Boxing Classic, Lucian Bute has been forced to fight lesser opponents while he waits for the conclusion of the super middleweight tournament on Dec. 17.

On that night, THE RING'S Nos. 1 and No. 2 168-pounders — Andre Ward and Carl Froch — will meet to determine the new RING champ, though the public knows there will be questions until the winner meets Bute.

Johnson had recently been eliminated from the Super Six by a one-sided defeat to Froch, and on Nov. 12 he had even less success against Bute, as the Canadian cruised to an uneventful shutout victory in front of 15,306 raucous hometown fans at the Pepsi Coliseum in Quebec City.

Bute, rated No. 3 by THE RING, controlled the contest from the opening bell with his excellent jab and right hook to stymie Johnson's attack. Johnson looked sluggish and was never able to mount an offense, his 42 years perhaps finally catching up to him. The Romanian-born Bute (30-0, 24 KOs) put to use his excellent body attack – considered one of the best in the game – and mixed it up to the head with ease.

Each frame resembled the last as Bute used his speed, size advantage and a furious tempo to much success while Johnson held his gloves in a tight guard. Bute seemed to hold back a few times in the match, possibly a display of compassion for his good friend and former sparring partner.

The scores were 120-108, 120-108 and 119-108.

With the loss, retirement seems near for Johnson (51-16-2, 35 KOs). The Jamaican-born Miamian, rated No. 9 by THE RING, has now lost four of his past six bouts.

Johnson represents the biggest name on Bute's resume but that likely will change in 2012, when we should see what he can do in a showdown with the Super Six champion.

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. outclassed Peter Manfredo Jr. in Houston.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR. TKO 5
PETER MANFREDO JR.

Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. has grown tired of comparisons to his iconic father and has set out to establish his own identity. To that end, in 2010 he hired a new trainer (Freddie Roach) and made fitness a priority.

Chavez's fifth-round knockout of Peter Manfredo on Nov. 19 in Houston on HBO – driving Manfredo into retirement – is further proof that he is succeeding.

Chavez was making the first defense of the WBC middleweight title he won by outpointing Sebastian Zbik in June.

"I have demonstrated that I have my own qualities," Chavez, 25, said in Spanish after his victory at Reliant Arena. "I am able to make my own history."

Chavez (44-0-1, 31 knockouts) seemed to surprise Manfredo (37-7, 20 KOs) with his improved boxing ability, particularly his jab. That, and Chavez's considerable power allowed him to control most of the fight.

In Round 3, Chavez began to circle, showing an easiness of motion that eluded him in previous fights. Gone were the plodding footwork and slow-developing left hooks with which Chavez bludgeoned limited foes in his first 20 matches. In this fight, he was a relaxed boxer-puncher who understood how to use both the geometry of the ring and proper leverage, winging right-hand leads that snapped Manfredo's head sideways.

Manfredo, fighting with determination, came on in the fourth round, but a right hand before the midway point of round five triggered a Chavez assault that would conclude the match. Touched hard by Manfredo's right cross, Chavez fired back, clipping Manfredo with a cross of his own that straightened the Rhode Islander. Seeing Manfredo's sudden unease, Chavez ran forward and began a half minute of brutal combinations that continued until referee Lawrence Cole could abide no more, rushing between the fighters and waving the fight off as Manfredo tossed forward to clinch Chavez.

"I was surprised by his power," said Manfredo, 30, after the fight. He later added, "I don't want to fight anymore."

At the time of Cole's stoppage, THE RING had awarded each round to Chavez, scoring the match 40-36.

Bart Barry

MIKE ALVARADO TKO 10
BREIDIS PRESCOTT

An upset was brewing on the undercard of Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez III on Nov. 12 in Las Vegas.

Breidis Prescott, the conqueror of Amir Khan, simply had to finish against Mike Alvarado and he would be declared the victor.

However, his lead on the scorecards was rendered meaningless when Mike Alvarado decided to impose a different ending. His face a crimson mask from cuts on his forehead and nose, Alvardo smiled through the blood and plowed forward, finally sending Prescott to the canvas with a vicious combination in the ninth round.

After dropping Prescott, Alvarado (32-0, 23 KOs) landed a number of brutal shots that forced referee Jay Nady to step in and halt the bout at 1:53 in the 10th. The 28-year-old Prescott (24-4, 19 KOs) was leading 87-84 twice and 86-85 at the time of the stoppage. "Mile High" Mike of Denver maintained his No. 10 RING rating at junior welterweight with the victory and propels himself to bigger fights at 140.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

Mike Alvarado (right) rallied to stop Breidis Prescott in a thrilling brawl.

PETER QUILLIN TKO 6
CRAIG McEWAN

Highly regarded middleweight prospect Peter Quillin finally made his HBO debut – as the co-feature to James Kirkland-Alfredo Angulo in Cancun, Mexico – and he didn't disappoint.

The 28-year-old Quillin (25-0, 20 KOs) controlled the action from the onset, finishing former sparring partner Craig McEwan (19-2, 10 KOs) in the sixth with a barrage of power shots in the corner. The stoppage wasn't without controversy. Referee Manolo Alcocer ended matters prematurely at 2:23, but the outcome seemed pre-determined, as McEwan, 160, was hurt badly and Quillin, 159¾, was pouncing, ready to close the show.

The bout was the Edinburgh, Scotland, native McEwan's second consecutive appearance on HBO, his last outing a 10th round TKO loss to Andy Lee.

With the win, the flamboyant Quillin, of Grand Rapids, Mich. sets himself up nicely in the middleweight division and seems likely to fight on HBO or Showtime his next time out, with bouts against Daniel Geale, Dmirty Pirog and RING middleweight champ Sergio Martinez in his sights.

RICKY BURNS UD 12
MICHAEL KATSIDIS

Ricky Burns made a statement in his lightweight debut, boxing effectively to stave off the Australian Michael Katsidis' brawling attack, winning by scores of 117-111 twice and 117-112.

The Scottish Burns, 28, made things exciting against Katsidis, 31, using his jab and toughness en route to the victory. Katsidis (28-5, 23 KOs) was very active as usual and brought the fight to Burns (33-2, 9 KOs), but was unable to generate offense consistently against Burns' tight defense.

It was a career-best victory for Burns, rated No. 7 by THE RING, who now is in the mix for meaningful fights at 135. Katsidis, a loser of three of his past four, is now clearly a gatekeeper, though he remains one of the most exciting fighters in the game.

JUAN CARLOS BURGOS MD 10
LUIS CRUZ

Juan Carlos Burgos turned in a minor upset in the opener of the Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez III card, with a majority decision victory over previously undefeated Luis Cruz.

Burgos (28-1, 19 KOs), whose only loss came at featherweight to Japanese titlist Hozumi Hasegawa in 2010, moved up to 130 for the opportunity against the Puerto Rican Cruz, and flourished on the strength of his commitment to the body.

The Mexican Burgos, 23, built up an early lead, hurting Cruz, 23, to the body time and time again. Burgos's attack caught up to Cruz (19-1, 15 KOs) in the sixth, with Cruz's right eye swolling shut. In the ninth, Burgos badly rocked Cruz, leading to a score of 95-95 even, overruled by two cards favoring Burgos, 98-93 and 97-92.

The loss is a big setback for Cruz, a promising fighter co-promoted by Top Rank and Miguel Cotto. He was rated No. 10 at 130 by THE RING heading into the contest, but he falls out with the loss, with Burgos taking his spot.

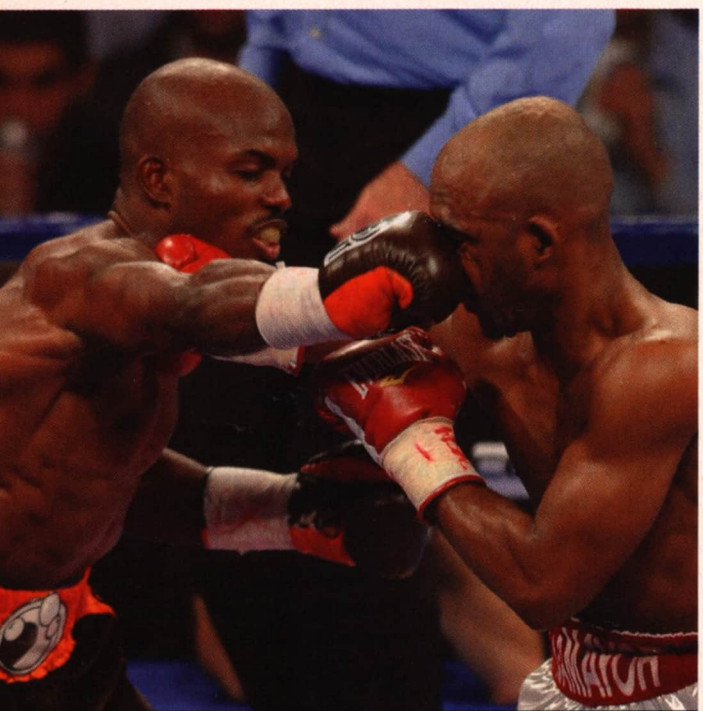
HERNAN MARQUEZ TKO 1
LUIS CONCEPCION

Eight months after their riveting contender for Fight of the Year, Hernan "Tyson" Marquez once again stopped Luis Concepcion, only this time he needed just one round.

In the first contest, an 11th round TKO victory for Marquez, he dropped the Panama City, Panama native three times. It was the same in this fight.

Marquez (32-2, 25 KOs) floored Concepcion (23-3, 18 KOs) for the first time early in the round, the result of a series of lefts. The 23-year-old, rated No.1 at 112 by THE RING, followed up and quickly knocked Concepcion, rated No. 7 by THE RING, into the ropes with an overhand left for the second knockdown. The Mexican then ended the bout at 1:49 with two crushing lefts, prompting referee Rafael Ramos to wave off the contest without a count, as Concepcion, 26, lay flattened on the mat.

A bout with RING champ and longtime flyweight kingpin Pongsaklek Wonjongkam could be in sight.



Timothy Bradley (left) took out Joel Casamayor on the Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez undercard.

TIMOTHY BRADLEY TKO 8
JOEL CASAMAYOR

Timothy Bradley, THE RING'S No. 2 junior welterweight, fought for just the second time in 2011, the nine-month layoff a product of his split with longtime co-promoter Gary Shaw. Fighting for the first time under the Top Rank promotional banner, Bradley turned in an impressive performance, albeit against an over-the-hill Joel Casamayor, dropping the former Cuban Olympic gold medalist three times en route to an eighth-round stoppage victory.

Bradley, 28, displayed his patented speed and in-fighting prowess, getting off first in exchanges and bullying Casamayor on the inside.

Bradley (28-0, 12 KOs) dropped the 40-year-old Casamayor (38-6-1, 22 KOs) with a left hook to the body in the fifth. The California native followed up with another knockdown in the sixth, the result of a left hook to the head. In the eighth, Casamayor (who tested positive for marijuana in the post-fight drug test) went down again, prompting his trainer Miguel Diaz to throw in the towel. Time of the stoppage was 2:59.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

Shinsuke Yamanaka took one in the chops here but ended up stopping Christian Esquivel in the 11th round to win the vacant WBC bantamweight title in Tokyo.

HEAVYWEIGHTS

CHRIS ARREOLA KO 3 RAPHAEL BUTLER
TYSON FURY KO 3 NEVEN PAJKIC
MARIUSZ WACH KO 6 JASON GAVERN
MICHAEL GRANT KO 12 FRANCOIS BOTHA
MANUEL CHARR TECH. WIN 8 MARCELO LUIZ NASCIMENTO
ANDRZEJ WAWRZYK KO 2 NELSON DARIO DOMINGUEZ
FRANKLIN LAWRENCE KO 2 RAYMOND OCHIENG

CRUISERWEIGHTS

DENIS LEBEDEV W 12 JAMES TONEY
GUILLERMO JONES KO 6 MICHAEL MARRONE
ALEXANDER ALEXEEV KO 8 DANIEL BRUWER
PAWEL KOLODZIEJ KO 2 MAURO ADRIAN ORDIALES
GARRETT WILSON KO 12 CHUCK MUSSACHIO
ALEXANDER KOTLOBAY KO 7 MANTAS TARVYDAS
BRAD PITT KO 5 VICTOR OGANOV
JULIEN PERRIAUX TECH. WIN 7 RENE HUEBNER

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

ISMAYL SILLAKH KO 4 ALI ISMAILOV
ENZO MACCARINELLI KO 1 GYORGY MAROSI
ALLAN GREEN W 10 SEBASTIEN DEMERS
MANNY VLAMIS KO 10 JOEL CASEY
CEDRIC AGNEW KO 6 DANIEL JUDAH

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

LUCIAN BUTE W 12 GLEN JOHNSON
GEORGE GROVES KO 2 PAUL SMITH
EZEQUIEL OSVALDO MADERNA KO 1 DARIO GERMAN BALMACEDA
MOUHAMED ALI NDIAYE KO 12 ANDREA DI LUISA
ZITA ZATYKO W 10 DIANA KISS
MAXIM VLASOV KO 3 ROMAN SHKARUPA

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR KO 5 PETER MANFREDO JR
BRANDON GONZALES W 8 OSSIE DURAN
SERGIO MORA TECH. WIN 7 JOSE ALFREDO FLORES
PETER QUILLIN KO 6 CRAIG MCEWAN
BILLI FACUNDO GODOY KO 1 LUCIANO SILVA
SAM SOLIMAN W 12 EROMOSELE ALBERT
MATT KOROBOV KO 4 LATIF MUNDY

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS

JAMES KIRKLAND KO 6 ALFREDO ANGULO
AUSTIN TROUT KO 6 FRANK LOPORTO
VANES MARTIROSYAN W 10 RICHARD GUTIERREZ
EMANUELE DELLA ROSA W 12 JOZSEF MATOLCSI
JOEY HERNANDEZ W 12 ELCO GARCIA
MICHEL SORO KO 6 SERGEI MELIS
SALIM LARBI W 12 ISAAC TORDJRO SELOM

WELTERWEIGHTS

MANNY PACQUIAO W 12 JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
LUIS CARLOS ABREGU KO 2 JAVIER ALBERTO MAMANI
LEONARD BUNDU W 12 DANIELE PETRUCCI
AKINORI WATANABE KO 4 KYOICHIRO SHOJI
COLIN LYNES W 12 LEE PURDY
JOAN GUZMAN KO 1 FLORENCIO CASTELLANO
DENNIS LAURENTE KO 7 AYI BRUCE
JOSHUA CLOTTEY KO 2 CALVIN GREEN
RAFAL JACKIEWICZ W 6 ANDRE DEOBALD
KEVIN BIZIER KO 3 CHRISTIAN BLADT
DENTON VASSELL W 12 SAMUEL COLOMBAN
FRANK HAROCHE HORTA TECH. WIN 8 DEAN BYRNE
LUCIANO ABIS KO 2 STANISLAS SALMON

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS

TIMOTHY BRADLEY KO 8 JOEL CASAMAYOR
MIKE ALVARADO KO 10 BREIDIS PRESCOTT
SERHIY FEDCHENKO W 12 WILLY BLAIN
JAVIER CASTRO KO 6 JAVIER MONSERRATE
PIER OLIVIER COTE KO 2 JORGE LUIS TERON
VICTOR MANUEL CAYO KO 1 NELSON SANCHEZ
ALI FUNEKA W 12 ZOLANI MARALI
COSME RIVERA W 12 ANTONIO PITALUA
ROBERTO ORTIZ KO 6 CARLOS URIAS
CHAD BENNETT KO 6 DECHO KOKIETGYM
JOSE BENAVIDEZ W 6 SAMUEL SANTANA

LIGHTWEIGHTS

RICKY BURNS W 12 MICHAEL KATSIDIS
MERCITO GESTA W 10 RICARDO DOMINGUEZ
JOSE A GONZALEZ W 10 FERNANDO TREJO
HARDY PAREDES KO 1 CID EDSON BISPO RIBEIRO
ABNER COTTO W 10 FERNANDO TORRES
THOMPSON MOKWANA KO 7 TAKALANE DANGALA

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS

TAKAHIRO AO W 12 DEVIS BOSCHIERO
DIEGO MAGDALENO W 10 EMMANUEL LUCERO
ARGENIS MENDEZ KO 2 ALEX PEREZ
ELOY PEREZ KO 6 IRA TERRY
JUAN CARLOS BURGOS W 10 LUIS CRUZ
BRYAN VAZQUEZ W 12 SANTOS BENAVIDES
GAMALIEL DIAZ KO 2 ADRIEL JUZAINO
MALCOLM KLASSEN W 12 DANIEL LOMELI
MIGUEL ROMAN W 10 PEDRO NAVARRETE
CASEY RAMOS W 8 JOSELITO COLLADO

FEATHERWEIGHTS

BILLY DIB KO 1 ALBERTO SERVIDEI
CHONLATARN PIRIYAPINYO KO 3 RYUTA MIYAGI
BERNABE CONCEPCION W 10 AARON GARCIA

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS

TAKALANI NDLOVU W 12 GIOVANNI CARO
WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR KO 3 ROBERTO CARLOS LEYVA
VICTOR TERRAZAS W 12 FERNANDO MONTIEL
STEVE MOLITOR W 10 SEBASTIEN GAUTHIER
ALEXANDER BAKHTIN W 10 LUIS MELENDEZ
JEREMY PARODI W 12 JOSE LUIS GRATEROL
SOD KOKIETGYM KO 5 FALAZONA FIDAL
EFRAIN ESQUIVIAS W 10 FERNANDO BELTRAN JR
JENIFEL VICENTE W 8 LUCIAN GONZALEZ

BANTAMWEIGHTS

SHINSUKE YAMANAKA KO 11 CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL
RYOSUKE IWASA W 10 ZEROFIT JEROPE ZUIYAMA

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI W 12 NOBUO NASHIRO
YOTA SATO KO 4 KENJI OBA
HUGO FIDEL CAZARES KO 7 ADAN GARCIA
TOMAS ROJAS KO 2 FELICIANO DARIO AZUAGA LEDESMA
SIMONA GALASSI W 10 NADEGE SZIKORA
CAROLINA RAQUEL DUER KO 3 MARIA JOSE NUNEZ
YUKI NASU W 8 KEN ACHIWA

FLYWEIGHTS

HERNAN MARQUEZ KO 1 LUIS CONCEPCION
MORUTI MTHALANE KO 7 ANDREA SARRITZU
TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI W 12 WILBERT UICAB
RODEL MAYOL KO 4 ERNIE MARQUEZ
RICHIE MEPRANUM W 8 RIGOBERTO CASILLAS
ARELY MUCINO KO 2 AVA KNIGHT

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

YESICA YOLANDA BOPP KO 1 SUZANNAH WARNER
JOSE ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ W 12 NETHRA SASIPRAPA
WISANU KOKIETGYM W 12 SAMMY HAGLER
YODMONGKOL VOR SAENGTHEP TECH. WIN 5 JACK AMISA

STRAWWEIGHTS

AKIRA YAEGASHI KO 10 PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK
WANHENG MENAYOTHIN W 12 CRISON OMAYAO
IVAN CALDERON W 10 FELIPE RIVAS
PAIPHAROB KOKIETGYM W 12 JESUS SILVESTRE
PIGMY KOKIETGYM KO 1 HENGKY ELLEUW
SIVIWE NTSIKO KO 2 TSHEPO LEFELE
NORIHITO TANAKA W 8 MAKOTO ARMY YOSHIDA

IMAGES: STEVE SAMOYEDNY / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

Christy Martin (right) made the cover of *Sports Illustrated*.

MOST-SIGNIFICANT FEMALE BOXERS OF ALL TIME

Words: **David Avila**

Female boxers have fought an uphill battle from the beginning.

They couldn't get licensed to fight for many years. They had no amateur programs. The majority of the female boxers of the 1960s and '70s received their training in the mixed martial arts world.

A new wave of women are now emerging from amateur programs with an entirely new skill set, yet the battle for recognition and decent paydays continues.

Still, many women have made their mark. Some have done so fighting in anonymity for peanuts out of love for the sport. Some have worked behind the scenes to improve conditions for women.

And, yes, a precious few have become famous, giving hope to young female boxers who dream of making it big.

In honor of those women who fought and succeeded under difficult circumstances, here are the 10 most-significant female boxers of all time.

MARIAN "LADY TYGER" TRIMIAR

Record: 11-2, 4 KOs
Active: 1976-85
Weight class: lightweight
Hometown: Bronx, N.Y.
Background: Trimiar exhibited a passion for the sport that few other female boxers could match. She actually went on a hunger strike to urge the California State Athletic Commission to license women boxers. She was also a fierce competitor in the ring who lived to box.

GRACIELA "THE GODDESS" CASILLAS

Record: 5-0-1, 2 KOs
Active: 1979-86
Weight class: featherweight
Hometown: Santa Monica, Calif.
Background: Like many female boxers, Casillas began in martial arts. She was a karate champion who drifted into boxing, where she won a major championship to go with her martial arts world title. She was also the first female boxer to pose for Playboy and was inducted into the Martial Arts Hall of Fame in 2005.

SUE "TIGER LILY" FOX

Record: 3-2-2
Active: 1976-77
Weight class: welterweight
Hometown: Portland, Ore.
Background: Fox was a southpaw whose record was anything but gaudy but she has become one of the most important journalists for women's boxing. Her contributions as both a pioneer prizefighter and historian cannot be measured or equaled. She remains an important figure in female professional boxing.

LUCIA "DUTCH DESTROYER" RIJKER

Record: 17-0, 14 KOs
Active: 1996-2004
Weight class: junior welterweight
Hometown: Amsterdam, Netherlands
Background: Rijker is considered far and away the most skillful female boxer of all time. Her main claim to fame was appearing in the Academy Award-winning film *Million Dollar Baby*. She remains the measuring stick for all female boxers today.

CHRISTY "COALMINER'S DAUGHTER" MARTIN
Record: 49-6-3, 31 KOs
Active: 1989-current
Weight class: welterweight
Hometown: Bluefield, W.Va.
Background: Martin is one of the few female boxers to have appeared on premium cable channels and the cover of *Sports Illustrated*. Her brawling pressure style has captivated fans for more than 20 years. Her last fight was this past June at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Her warrior spirit has never waned despite injuries and setbacks.

ANN "BROWN SUGAR" WOLFE
Record: 24-1, 16 KOs
Active: 1998-2006
Weight class: light heavyweight
Hometown: Waco, Texas
Background: Wolfe's punching power produced one of the most frightening knockouts in female boxing history, a single punch that ended her fight against heavyweight Vonda Ward in 2004. It was Ward's only career loss. Wolfe is now retired and works as a trainer for junior middleweight contender James Kirkland.

LAILA "SHE BEE STINGIN" ALI
Record: 24-0, 21 KOs
Active: 1999-2007
Weight class: super middleweight
Hometown: Los Angeles, Calif.
Background: Ali entered the limelight because of her father Muhammad Ali's fame but gained skill and expertise during her career. She combined superior athleticism with solid fundamentals to retire undefeated. One goal she never realized was to take on rival Ann Wolfe, a fight the fans wanted to see.

REGINA HALMICH
Record: 54-1-1, 16 KOs
Active: 1994-2007
Weight class: flyweight
Hometown: Karlsruhe, Germany
Background: Halmich was Germany's queen of boxing and fought most of the best fighters in and near her weight class. A fierce boxer with an iron will, she is one of the handful of women to have more than 50 pro fights. Her only loss in 1995 (against Yvonne Trevino in Las Vegas) came the only time she fought outside of Germany. After that, she never again ventured beyond her own country's borders but raised the popularity of women's boxing at home.

LAYLA "AMAZING" MCCARTER
Record: 34-13-5, 7 KOs
Active: 1998-current
Weight class: junior welterweight
Hometown: Alameda, Calif.
Background: McCarter, 32, is a trailblazer who demanded and received permission to fight three-minute rounds and 12-round championship fights (as opposed to the 10 two-minute rounds most women go in a title bout). A participant in over 50 contests and one of the few women willing to travel anywhere for a fight, she is considered the most skillful boxer in the game today.

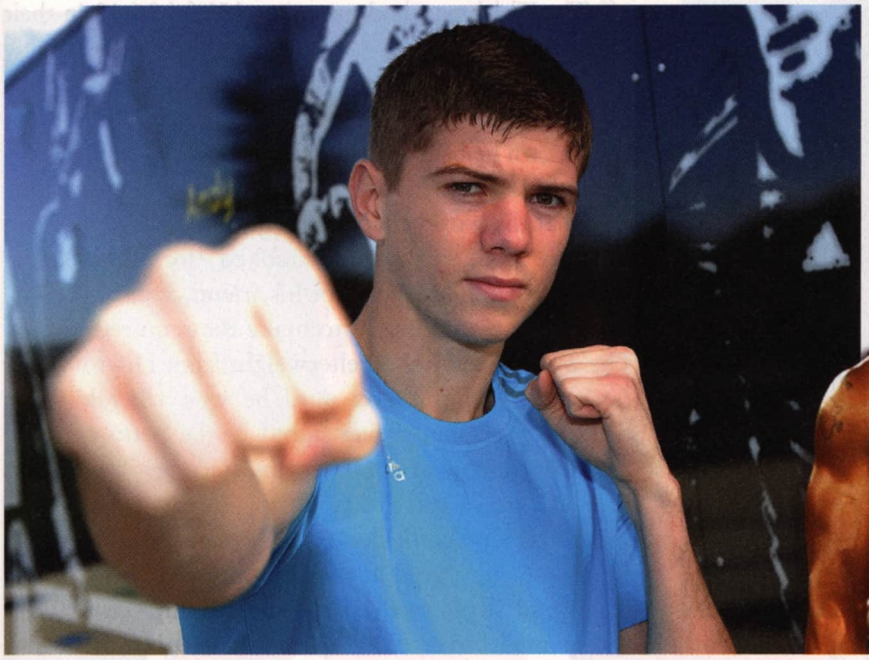
KELSEY "ROAD WARRIOR" JEFFRIES
Record: 41-10-1, 4 KOs
Active: 1999-2009
Weight class: junior featherweight
Hometown: Gilroy, Calif.
Background: Jeffries, 36, is a gritty bantamweight who, despite suffering four consecutive defeats early in her career, managed to correct her flaws and eventually win world titles in the junior featherweight and featherweight divisions. Earning her nickname with a willingness to fight anywhere, she had more than 50 prizefights in her career.

OTHERS WHO SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED:
Isra Girgrah (28-3-2, 11 KOs), Jenifer Alcorn (18-0, 11 KOs), Laura Serrano (17-4-2) Chevelle "Fists of Steel" Hallback (28-8-2, 11 KOs), Melissa Hernandez (16-2-3, 6 KOs), Sumya "Island Girl" Anani (25-3-1, 10 KOs), Bridgett "Baby Doll" Reilly (15-3, 7 KOs), Melinda "La Maravilla" Cooper (21-1, 11 KOs), Holly "Hottie" Holm (30-1-3) and Mia St. John (46-11-2, 18 KOs).

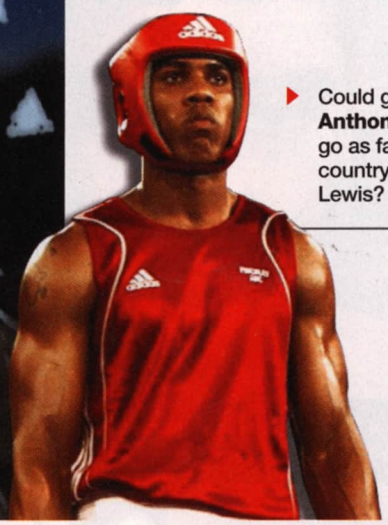
Women's boxing notes: Ava Knight (14-1-1, 8 KOs) of Chico, Calif., (7-1-3, 4 KOs) knocked out Mexico's Arely Mucino (14-1-1, 8 KOs) to win the IBF flyweight title. The match took place in Colima, Mexico in late October. Knight knocked out Mucino with a left hook to the chin.

An international women's amateur tournament was set to take place in Oxnard, California in early November. Boxers from Poland, Canada, Mexico, Germany, Russia and the USA are participating and gearing up for the 2012 Olympics in London. It's the first time women's boxing will be part of the games. Three weight classes will be featured and include 112-pound flyweights, 132-pound lightweights and 165-pound middleweights.

Former mini-flyweight world champion Terri Moss was honored by the Georgia Boxing Hall of Fame as "Most Influential Person in Boxing" in November. "It means a lot to be awarded by my peers and critics," said Moss.



Luke Campbell won a silver medal in the 2011 world championships.



Could giant **Anthony Joshua** go as far as countryman Lennox Lewis?

IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

THE ROAD TO LONDON

THE RING WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE 2012 OLYMPIC TEAMS OF ONE NATION EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH: GREAT BRITAIN

Words: **Brian Doogan**

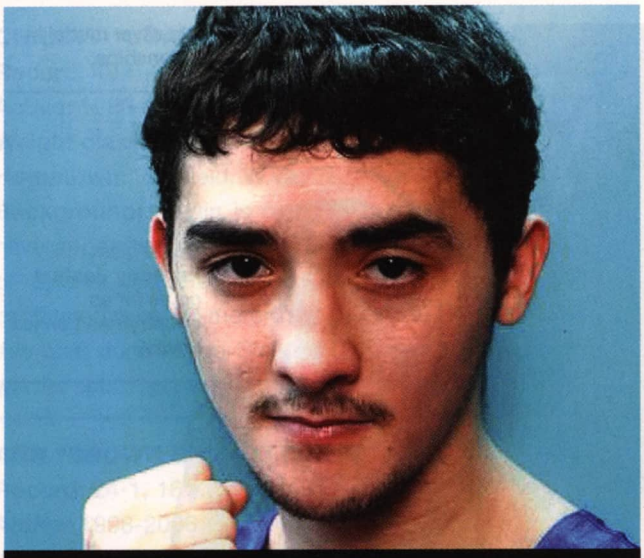
Global economic conditions are the worst since the Great Depression but organizers of the London Olympics believe that Britain's historic, cultural, social and sporting assets will make the 2012 Games an experience to cherish. London will stand more for legacy than eye-popping pyrotechnics and the cast of thousands that characterized the Beijing Olympics in 2008, insists Seb Coe, who heads the London Olympics organizing committee.

Who for Britain, then, will meet the burden of expectation in the boxing ring?

Of the strong line-up of contenders for medals, Anthony Joshua may be the most interesting. Holder of the British record as a 16-year-old for the 100 meters, his aspiration was always to emulate Lennox Lewis, not Usain Bolt. One of his coaches at Finchley (London) Amateur Boxing Club, Sean Murphy, insists he can see the 6-foot-6 (198cm) 21-year-old super heavyweight "going as far as Lennox Lewis," although that's not reason in itself to buy into the hype. Joshua's credentials have been seriously enhanced by the considerable achievement of beating the reigning Olympic and double world champion Roberto Cammarelle of Italy in the quarterfinals of the recent world championships in Baku, Azerbaijan. In the final, he lost to the Azerbaijani, Magomedrasul Medzhidov, by a solitary point.

"The last three Olympic Games have produced three British amateur stars in Audley Harrison, Amir Khan and James DeGale, and Joshua could definitely be the next big name to emerge," agrees promoter Frank Warren. "He's got the looks, he's young and, most of all, he can fight. Plus he's in a glamour division. He pulled of an unbelievable win over Cammarelle in Baku, which to my mind was arguably one of the greatest wins ever by a young British amateur. I would say definitely he is one of the names to look out for in London. And it will help, too, that he's a local lad."

Joshua's progression marked an astonishing turnaround in fortunes for Britain's efforts to find a credible challenger at +91kg, for less than six months previously he was not even a member of Britain's elite squad. He was invited to live four days a week with the rest of the squad at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield and he has embraced life there. "I'm studying to become a personal trainer," he said. "It



Andrew Selby is the first European amateur champion from Wales in 86 years.

is an option we have alongside the training, so I'm getting a qualification. The team set-up is very, very good. Everything we do here teaches you how to be a man: discipline, knowing to say 'no' to certain things and knowing what's right."

Joshua was suspended from the squad in February 2011 when charged with possession of drugs, something with which he insists he had nothing to do, but the episode represented a timely reminder of the pitfalls of keeping bad company. "It was a learning curve for me," he said, having accepted a minor charge that drew a line under the incident. "It was a sign for me to not hang around anywhere near the wrong people."

The right people were those who could further his boxing ambitions. "My cousin was the guy who first got me down to Finchley, and it was a real workout," he said. "There were a group of super heavyweights there, seven of them, so I got to progress pretty quickly, but they gave me a hard time at first. I'd take silly shots but I improved because I stuck with it. Now boxing at the Olympics is on my mind every day. I want to get the gold medal at those Olympics. I'm very proud to represent Britain. I'm not thinking about being a professional. I'm just concerned with what happens in the next few months and next summer. The Olympics in London will only happen once in my lifetime, and I intend to make the most of it."

KEEP AN EYE ON ...

Flyweight Andrew Selby secured his place on Team Great Britain after Khalid Yafai failed to make the weight for the second bout of their best-of-three box-off. The Welshman had outpointed Yafai 26-12 in their first encounter. The 22-year-old has rebounded strongly after suffering a slump early in his career. And he became the first European amateur champion from Wales in 86 years when he beat former three-time champion Georgy Balakshin, which he followed up by winning a silver medal at the world championships in Baku.

Tom Stalker was overlooked for the Beijing Olympics squad in favor of his friend, Frankie Gavin, who subsequently failed to make the required weight. The 27-year-old light welterweight from Huyton, near Liverpool, did not box until he was 18, taking up the sport to avoid being mired in the petty criminal activity that characterized his teenage years. He trained with Carl Froch at the Great Britain elite squad base in Sheffield, won bronze at the 2011 world championships, gold at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi and silver at the European championships. He was named boxer of the year in 2010 by the British Boxing Writers' Club.

Luke Campbell was born with dyslexia and played rugby in his youth before taking up boxing at 13 to improve his confidence. The 24-year-old bantamweight from Hull won a silver medal at the 2011 world championships after winning gold at the Four Nations Challenge and European Cup in 2010. In 2008 he became the first Englishman in 47 years to win a gold medal at the European championships.

Welterweight Fred Evans, 20, was inspired by Amir Khan's precocious performance at the Athens Olympics in 2004, and competing at the Olympic Games has been his dream ever since. He first represented Britain at the junior level and in 2008 was flown to Beijing to gain valuable experience of the atmosphere at an Olympics in preparation for London 2012. Winner of the 2007 European cadet title, Evans won gold at the 2011 European championships in Turkey. ■

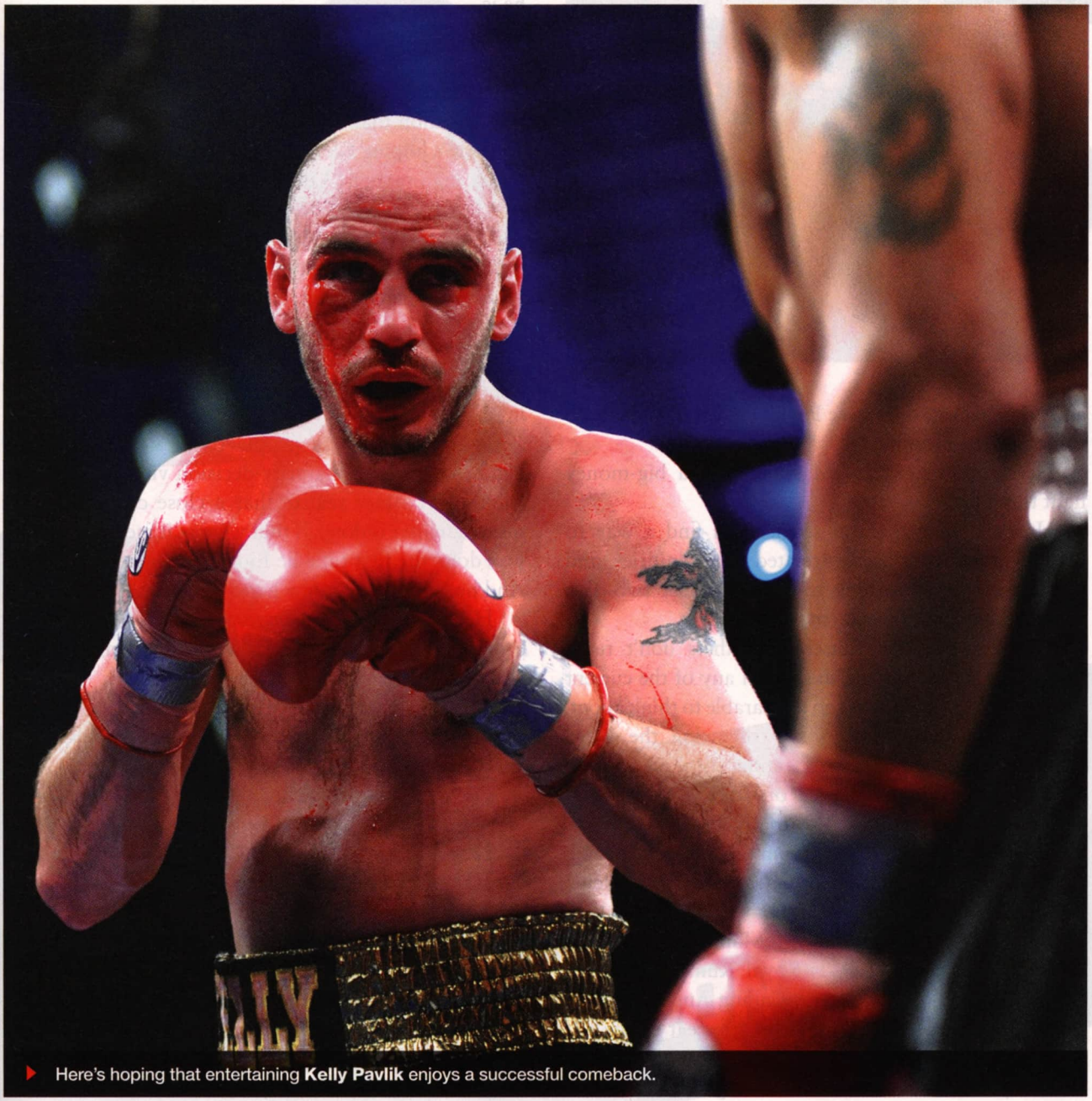


IMAGE: EMILY HARNEY / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

Here's hoping that entertaining **Kelly Pavlik** enjoys a successful comeback.

BEFORE THE APOCALYPSE

Words: **Don Stradley**

According to the Mayan calendar, the universe is coming to an end in December 2012.

In the event that the Mayans were correct, there are a few things I'd like to see happen before the impending apocalypse. Of course, some of my hopes aren't likely – I'm still waiting for the return of 20-round fights – but some of the other things I'm thinking about are possible.

For instance, here's hoping Kelly Pavlik enjoys a successful comeback. Was he destined to be an all-time great? No. But it's a shame if his career ends in a haze of alcohol, managerial problems and his flaking out over a Showtime fight that no one really cared about in the first place. Boxing is a sport of second chances

and comebacks, so let's see Pavlik get his chance to do something memorable.

Here's hoping Sergio Martinez gets a big-money fight this year.

Here's hoping medical science can find a way to help fighters with boxing-related head injuries and perhaps create something to wipe the last two Tim Bradley fights from our memories. Forever.

Here's hoping the Klitschko brothers don't retire just yet, because replacing them with any of the current heavyweight contenders is too unbearable to think about.

I'd like to see fighters stop throwing the word "champion" around. After beating Alfredo Angulo, James Kirkland went on and on about how Angulo was a "great champion." For the record, Angulo has won an "interim" WBO belt from the immortal Harry Joe Yorgey and, more recently, defeated Joachim Alcine for a vacant WBC Continental Americas belt, which sounds like something Vince McMahon chucked out of a cage at the last WWE Royal Rumble. Roberto Duran was a great champion. Calling Angulo a great champion is like calling Sharktopus a great movie. Of course, we understand Kirkland's excitement. The last time anyone saw Kirkland he was getting his head beat in by Nobuhiro Ishida, a 36-year-old Japanese journeyman with a knockout percentage slightly higher than a Times Square hooker swinging her purse.

Still, here's hoping Kirkland can continue his winning ways. He needs to pick up a few of the finer points of boxing, though. Ann Wolfe is pretty good at yelling insults at him while he's wrestling goats in her garage, but she ought to teach Kirkland how to hook off a jab. He had Angulo out on his feet for five rounds and couldn't put him down.

Here's hoping Lucian Bute is as good as we think he is.

Here's hoping Adrien Broner is as good as he thinks he is.

Here's hoping Paul Williams is still as good as Dan Goossen thinks he is.

Here's hoping boxing reporters can think of a better lead question than "How are things going in camp?"

Here's hoping Glen Johnson can think of something better than saying, "I thought I won the fight."

Here's hoping some smart promoter realizes Mike Alvarado and Lucas Matthysse are in the same weight class and matches them immediately.

Here's hoping that Showtime will have another tournament, but that it wraps up in less than three years. (You know, with the Mayan calendar and all, it'll be hard to plan a tournament while the universe is in flames.)

Here's hoping the people trying to bury Manny Pacquiao after his majority-decision victory over Juan Manuel Marquez realize that a close contest doesn't mean a fighter is done. If that was so, it means Pacquiao was done the first time he fought Marquez, doesn't it? And he's had quite a few good fights since then.

Here's hoping Chad Dawson realizes that throwing a 46-year-old man to the canvas doesn't make him a bad-ass.

Here's hoping Carl Froch fights a bunch more times on Showtime, whether or not he wins the Super Six tournament.

Here's hoping Ireland's Andy Lee has a better career than Ireland's John Duddy.

Here's hoping I'm not the only one thinking constantly about Sam Peter versus Kimbo Slice. HBO, are you listening?

By the way, let's see HBO 24/7 change things up a little this year. By now the show has become a parody of itself. We see fighters jogging; we see them getting their hands taped; we see them in cars; we see them getting out of cars; we see members of their entourage laugh at things that aren't funny. We see fighters on their cell phones; we see them eating. We see them jumping over logs on a beach. And Liev Schreiber narrates as if it is all so bloody important. Come on, Liev, it isn't the Nuremberg trial – it's Roger Mayweather going to Quiznos for a sammich.

Here's hoping we finally get the match everyone is waiting for: Felix Sturm versus Sebastian Zbik. Come on guys, put up or shut up. We're tired of waiting.

Here's hoping we don't lose any more good guys like Scott LeDoux and Nick Charles.

And here's hoping if we are ever blessed with another Joe Frazier, we treat him right.

Happy apocalypse, everybody! ■

ANDRE WARD
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DOES GARDEN HAVE ANOTHER MARCIANO?
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